



HEART
QUEST™ BOOK

1

Ring of the Ruby Dragon

BY JEANNIE
BLACK



\$2.25 8801



PICK A PATH TO ROMANCE AND ADVENTURE™



Encircling your waist with his strong hands, Torbeck draws you closer and closer, his intention, clearly, to kiss you. Your heart beats wildly in anticipation.

Should I let him kiss me? you think. His rugged good looks charm you irresistibly . . .

Stop it, Chandelle! you chide yourself. *I haven't time for this nonsense, not while my father has yet to be rescued from whoever, or whatever, took him away!*

But here, in this lovely glade Torbeck's closeness excites you in a way you've never before experienced and drives logical thought from your mind.

Are you both spellbound by the enchanting powers of a malevolent being in this seemingly harmless forest, or is what you feel real?

You must make a decision.

*Will you free yourself from Torbeck's arms and hope for another opportunity in the future, when you are certain of no mystic intervention?
If you avoid kissing him, turn to page 78.*

*If you decide that a kiss can do no harm,
turn to page 94.*

Whichever path you pick, you are sure to find romance and adventure as you discover the
RING OF THE RUBY DRAGON

Have you read these
HEARTQUEST™ adventure-romance books?

#1 RING OF THE RUBY DRAGON

#2 TALISMAN OF VALDEGARDE

#3 SECRET SORCERESS

#4 ISLE OF ILLUSION



**HEART
QUEST™ BOOK**

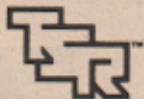
1

Ring of the Ruby Dragon

BY JEANNIE BLACK



Cover art by Elmore
Interior art by Jim Holloway



TSR, Inc.
PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION™

This book is for the REAL Chandelle

RING OF THE RUBY DRAGON

©1983 TSR, Inc.

All Rights Reserved.

This book is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction of unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of TSR, Inc.

Distributed to the book trade in the United States by Random House, Inc. and in Canada by Random House of Canada, Ltd.

Distributed in the United Kingdom by TSR (UK), Ltd.

Distributed to the toy and hobby trade by regional distributors.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, HEARTQUEST, and PICK A PATH TO ROMANCE AND ADVENTURE are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.

First Printing: November, 1983

Printed in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 83-51035

ISBN: 0-88038-065-9

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

All characters in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

TSR, Inc.
P.O. Box 756
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

TSR (UK), Ltd.
The Mill, Rathmore Road
Cambridge CB1 4AD
United Kingdom

You are about to set off on a romantic adventure in which *you* will face many decisions. Some choices you will determine with your head—others with your heart. Each choice takes you on a different path to a separate ending. So be careful . . . you must choose wisely!

Do not read this book from beginning to end. Instead, as you are faced with a decision, follow the instructions and keep turning to the pages to which your choices lead you until you come to an end. You may meet a handsome adventurer or chance upon self discovery. Success or disaster—the choice that leads you there is yours!



You laugh with delight as the centaur nears your wagon. You don't often get to see centaurs, because they rarely come near humans. So you find the creature with a human head and torso on a sleek horse's body quite fascinating to see.

"Look, Father!" you exclaim. "It's coming to see us." But your delight upon seeing the centaur turns to dismay as the centaur's human hands begin swinging a heavy oaken club at your horse.

"Father," you exclaim, "centaurs aren't suppose to be vicious! Why is it coming after us?"

"Hold on tightly, Chandelle," your father says. "Let's get away from it."

You clutch the side of the wagon as your father urges the horse, Dawdle, to pick up the pace and outrun the malevolent centaur. A shadow falls across your face, and you look up to see two winged lions flying toward you. They look as if they're going to land on the centaur's back. Maybe they're going to help you!

But again something is wrong—the winged lions, known to be good and friendly creatures, are helping the centaur! Together they drag on the traces and try to force your horse to a halt.

Standing, you brace yourself against the swaying and rushing of the wagon and prepare to leap to the back of the nearest winged lion, hoping to direct it away from your father and the wagon. But as you jump, the creature moves to the side abruptly, and you hit the ground. The breath explodes from your body as you land amid Dawdle's flying hooves. One hoof strikes your head, and you are conscious of nothing else . . .

When you open your eyes, you feel a pain shooting through your head and remember the horse's hooves. You flinch as you expect another hoof to strike, but then you realize that you are alone. The centaur is gone. The lions have flown away. Your father is gone, too.

"Father?" you whisper, alarmed at the silence surrounding you. Then you rise and see your wagon nearby. Surprisingly, Dawdle stands next to it, quietly munching the grass as though nothing unusual has happened. You hurry to the wagon, expecting to see your father lying in it hurt. But the wagon is empty.

Moving out from the wagon in ever-widening circles, you look for signs of your father's fate, but find nothing—no blood, no weapons, no evidence of scuffling—nothing but animal tracks. He must have been carried away by the flying lions.

Returning forlornly to the wagon, you sink down on the seat, absently brushing the leaves from your fur-trimmed cloak. *What have they done with Father?* you think, your body trembling in fear. You feel more alone than you've ever thought possible.

You have been working as your father's apprentice for five years, ever since your mother died when you were ten years old. Even though you travel all across the land to make jeweled and golden items for the lords and ladies, you've never felt in danger. But now . . .

"Father!" you shout, overcome by an unaccustomed feeling of panic. You turn and shout in all directions, "Father!" But the only sounds that meet your ears are the clink and squeak of the leather traces as Dawdle stirs.

Suddenly, you remember your father's collection of

valuable gems. *Did the beasts take them?* you wonder.

Quickly you raise the wagon seat and explore the box beneath it. But even as you sort through the things inside, you know in your heart that the matched set of emeralds—the set your father worked so hard to acquire for Lord Darkell—is gone. Your heart sinks. Reluctant to give up hope, you move aside some clothing in the bottom of the box. A small leather pouch catches your eye. Maybe they didn't get everything!

Lowering the wagon seat, you quickly sit and open the pouch in your lap. Out tumbles a set of strange stones. Certainly not the finely polished gems your jeweler father mounts for the aristocracy, these seemingly ordinary stones must have been overlooked by the plundering beasts. As you start to inspect them, they begin to move! One by one, the stones drift out of your hand and up into the air, where they form a ring around your head near the golden circlet that holds your long auburn hair in place.

As you note the stones' vivid colors—pale blue, scarlet, banded pink and green, lavender, a beautiful dusty rose, and even a vibrant purple—a faint memory creeps into your mind, a memory of playing with these stones when you were a child. You had tossed them from hand to hand and laughed with delight when they formed the ring. But when your father came into the room, he hurriedly plucked the stones out of the air, scooped them into the bag, and shoved the bag into his pocket.

"They aren't toys," he had said. Then he sat next to you, placing an arm around your shoulder, and explained that they were ioun stones, wonderful stones of magical protection. Each provided a different aid—

more power to a strong arm, greater perception, greater dexterity, increased ability to survive without food or water. The lustrous pearl had the power to heal, and the lavender stones could remove magical spells surrounding a victim by absorbing them.

Now you remember clearly. Your father had taken one of the stones from the bag—the deep purple one—and said in a voice hushed by awe, “This stone was prepared by a great wizard for a special journey into strange and dangerous lands. It contains magical spells to protect him on the journey.”

“Are the spells still in there?” you had asked.

“Yes. The wizard never used the stone,” he replied.

“But, Papa, what does the stone do?” you asked, astonished that such a small stone could hold so much power.

He replied thoughtfully, “I know some of the spells he put into the stone, my little one, but not all. Perhaps it’s better not to ask. Now let’s put the pretty stones away.” And he gave you a hug.

Remembering, you pick the stones out of the air and return them to their pouch, pondering what to do. Not long before the attack, your father had said that soon you would reach the next town on your journey to Lord Darkell’s to make the special emerald jewelry. Maybe you can get help there, someone who will help you find your father.

“Oh, Father! Will I ever see you again?” Tears well in your eyes and start to roll down your cheeks.

Your horse stirs, and you look up to see coming toward you through the woods a knight clad in chain-mail armor and leather and mounted on a magnificent cinnamon-colored horse. You quickly brush the tears

from your face and try to straighten your clothing.

As he rides toward your wagon, he notices you watching him and sits straighter on his horse.

Stopping in front of you, the knight smiles and bows from the waist. "Good day, milady."

You smile gratefully at the "milady," more used to hearing "young lass," or even "little girl."

"Hello," you say in return, immediately captivated by the bright personality and dark features of this handsome young knight.

"How do you do?" he says, smiling. Then he notices the tears you failed to wipe away and his brow furrows with concern. "Are you a maiden in distress?" he asks and quickly dismounts.

"Well, I guess I am," you say, reminded of your present plight.

"What happened?"

"I was traveling with my father when a centaur and two winged lions charged our wagon, trying to gain control of our horse," you say, pointing to Dawdle. "When I tried to stop them, I fell from the wagon and was knocked out for a while."

"Are you all right?" he asks quickly.

"Oh, yes," you assure him. "But when I woke up, Father was gone and so were all the jewels."

"Jewels?"

"My father makes fine jewelry. Lord Darkell has entrusted us with obtaining and mounting two rare and exceptionally beautiful emeralds. I serve as my father's assistant," you say proudly.

"Oh, what shall I do?" you cry, thinking of your losses. "I suppose I must continue toward town and try to find help."

"I . . . I'm a knight," says the young man in armor, stating the obvious. "I would be honored to come to your aid, fair, uh . . . What is your name?"

"Chandelle," you offer, smiling at his uncertainty.

"Chandelle," he repeats slowly, as if savoring the sound. "How beautiful!"

"Thank you," you say, pleased with his compliment. "And who are you?"

"I am Coren . . . SIR Coren." He blushes and then lifts his chin proudly. "I've just finished my training and been knighted. Bilkin here—" He pats his horse— "trained with me."

"Congratulations!" you exclaim, your image of this knight altering slightly. "How exciting for you! Are you on a quest?"

"I will be, when I can find one. But in the meantime I would be very happy to help you."

Your heart leaps at the thought of traveling with this attractive young man, but you hesitate. *Would a novice knight be a help or a hindrance in my search for Father?* you ask yourself.

You look at him carefully and notice that the sword at his side shines brightly. *Has it ever been used?* you wonder. And then, afraid that the answer is no, you say, "Thank you for offering your aid, Sir Coren, but I don't even know for sure where we are. I think I'd better go into town and find someone who knows this area."

Coren's smile disappears, disappointment evident in his now slumping shoulders. "Well, I just thought maybe . . ." His voice trails off, and then you see a new alertness in his body.

"Look!" he exclaims, kneeling down. "These are

the tracks of the centaur. We can follow them right to your father. It will be raining soon, though, and the tracks will disappear. We must leave now." Then he adds, his shyness forgotten in his excitement, "I'm very good at following tracks."

You feel his enthusiasm begin to remove your uncertainty. *Maybe he can help*, you think. *Maybe he knows more than he appears to know. And maybe it would be fun to spend time with him.* You brush at your red gown and cloak, wishing they hadn't gotten so wrinkled.

Stop it, Chandelle, you tell yourself sternly. *Be realistic. I can't go off with this man just because he's attractive! I need someone with experience.*

You're about to make up your mind when you think, *But I should go hunting for my father while the tracks are still fresh. They might be washed away by the time I return from town with help.*

You must decide.

*Do you want to trust Coren
and follow the fresh tracks on the ground?
If so, turn to page 110.*

*Or will you go to town and find more experienced
help? If this is your choice, turn to page 99.*

Sword at the ready, Torbeck stands beside you as you push open the door embedded with the beautiful blue sapphire. Jancy tries to squeeze in between you, eager to see whatever new splendor is revealed.

But you see neither beauty nor immediate danger. Instead of silks and spun gold, the room you enter has walls of cold rock, each wall lined with iron instruments of torture.

Your heart seems to stop as you gasp, "Father?" Afraid you might find your real father's mangled body, you force yourself to look around the place of horror. Tables and pulleys and cranks conjure up unspeakable horrors in your mind. Everywhere are chains, sunk deep into the rock walls.

"Let's make another choice," says Jancy. "There's nothing here," and she turns to go back into the room of lapis lazuli.

As you turn to follow her, a clanking sound stops you and you look behind the door. There, held fast by heavy iron chains, is the most beautiful woman you've ever seen. A cloud of golden hair surrounds her face of delicate features, at the moment contorted in anguish. The chains that bind her crisscross a sky-blue gown of elaborate embroidery.

You feel yourself being pushed aside by Torbeck as he rushes to the woman's side.

The woman doesn't speak, but you see hope spring into her face, hope that turns to wonder as she looks up at the handsome knight leaning over her.

Torbeck practically falls over himself in his haste to find a way to release her.

"Torbeck, who—" you start to say, but then you realize that he's concentrating totally on the bound

woman. A feeling of cold anger washes over you, the same anger you felt when Torbeck was talking so intently to Jancy. *How can I be jealous of a woman in chains?* you chide yourself.

You're about to ask the woman a few questions when Jancy says, "Wait!" and rushes to Torbeck's side.

"Don't be silly!" he exclaims. "Can't you see she's in pain?"

Jancy turns to you and, looking more serious than she's been since she told you about the dragon destroying her village, says, "I have a feeling this is a trap. I can't exactly see it, but . . . I'm sure it's a trap."

You look at the two women beside you, one in pain and peering hopefully into the knight's—*your* knight's!—face, the other appealing to you to trust her, to believe in her skills. And both of them women of whom you have been jealous. What will you do?

If you want to believe Jancy, try to persuade Torbeck not to release the woman. Turn to page 129.

But if you want to overcome your feelings of jealousy, decide to help the woman and turn to page 115.

Suddenly, you realize that you've been depending on Dawdle to take you where you want to go. And now you have no idea where you are.

You ride for hours, until well after nightfall, always hoping that you'll find something familiar. Eventually, weariness makes it difficult to remain in your saddles, and the three of you curl up under your cloak to try to sleep for a few hours. When dawn breaks, you are riding again.

As the days pass and you wander aimlessly, Torbeck begins to blame first Jancy for taking you to the witch and then you for following the witch's advice. Jancy's exuberance is gone. Finally, to avoid fighting with each other, you each withdraw inside yourselves, rarely speaking to one another.

When at last you emerge from the forest, in an area where no one has ever heard of a red dragon, the anxiety of being lost has driven Torbeck, Jancy, and you into your own little shells.

As you say good-bye to the others, more with relief than sorrow, you hope that you can somehow still find the ruby dragon's lair and in it your father, still alive.

THE END

You want very much for this whole thing to be over. You want your father back. You want to be out of here! As quickly as possible!

"I'm coming!" you call.

The man turns and smiles as he holds out a hand to pull you toward him. "Come," he says gently.

The others follow you down a short corridor. Torbeck and Coren seem to pull back slightly and draw their swords, but Jancy urges them along.

The man stops before an iron door, unlocks it, and pushes it open with one hand. Bowing slightly, he says, "In here."

You glance in and gasp when you see a familiar figure standing at a workbench. "Father!" you cry.

You dash in, the others following . . . and you hear the door slam soundly behind you.

"Thank you," says the velvet voice through the door. "Now we can stop this silly chase. There's plenty of work for all."

You rush and look through the grillwork in the door just in time to see the tail of a huge red dragon disappearing down the corridor.

You fall into your father's arms, sobbing for having made such a bad choice. But you realize, too, that you still have your ring of magical gems, and there may yet be a way to defeat the ruby dragon.

THE END

You look at the large guardian naga, so fierce-looking but so earnestly philosophical. You have the feeling that the snakelike creature really wants to help you and is trying very hard to do so in spite of the evil hold the red dragon has over it.

"Let's go down the passageway on the right," you say, and you all head through the opening.

You quickly discover that the passage looks just like other passages you've been down, and you don't understand why the naga should say you'd find it "interesting."

But then you turn a corner, and the passage ends abruptly at a door.

There is no handle, so you push on the door, but nothing happens.

Jancy examines it and pronounces it clear of secret traps, but then she adds in a puzzled tone, "There is something funny about it."

"Step aside," Torbeck says, "Maybe I can open it."

But nothing happens when Torbeck bangs and kicks. Finally, in a fury, he pulls out a small knife and says, "All right! We'll cut our way in!"

"No, you won't!" exclaims a voice from the door.

"Huh?" exclaims Torbeck, quickly pulling back his knife.

"Where are you?" you ask.

"Right in front of you," the voice answers, a bit impatiently.

"But there's nothing in front of us but a door," says Coren.

"Correct."

"The door's talking?" asks Torbeck, his eyes getting wider.

"The door is talking!" says Jancy excitedly.

"Now that we've determined that I am a door and I am talking to you," says the voice snidely, "perhaps we can get on with our business."

"What is *our* business?" you ask.

"I am a magical door. Not everyone can go through me."

"Do you want money?" asks Torbeck.

"No."

"Food," suggests Jancy.

"No."

"I'll be happy to sing and dance," adds the halfling.

"No, thank you."

"Well, is there a special key?" you ask.

"There is a special key," replies the door, "but it is not a key of metal."

"Then what is it?" Coren asks.

"The key that unlocks me is love." You all look at each other, very puzzled. "Only those who truly love someone else can go through me. Those who would try deception will never see the other side of me."

"Is it important that we get to the other side?" you ask.

"Only if you desire to finish your quest."

"You mean that all we have to do is really love someone, and we can step right through you. You don't have to open or anything?" asks Coren.

"Correct."

"Well, this is ridiculous," says Sir Torbeck. "No door is going to stop me. And anyway, I'll have no problem getting through. I love Chandelle, here." And before you realize what he's doing, he swings around and puts a hand in back of your head. Pulling you to

him, he kisses you on your mouth and steps back.

"See? I love her!" and he turns toward the door and takes a big step. His foot begins to go right through the seemingly solid door, but then, in the blink of an eye, Torbeck—armor, weapons, and all—turns to dust, which falls into a small mound on the floor.

"Torbeck!" you gasp.

"Deceit can be dangerous," says the door. "That knight loved only himself."

You feel a sudden sadness for Sir Torbeck—his blustering self-confidence, his inability to confess to being afraid of the water, his readiness to help you when you first met. Turning to Jancy, you see tears in her eyes and a forlorn look on her face."

"You loved him, didn't you, Jancy?"

She looks rueful and then nods slightly. "But like the door said, he loved only himself."

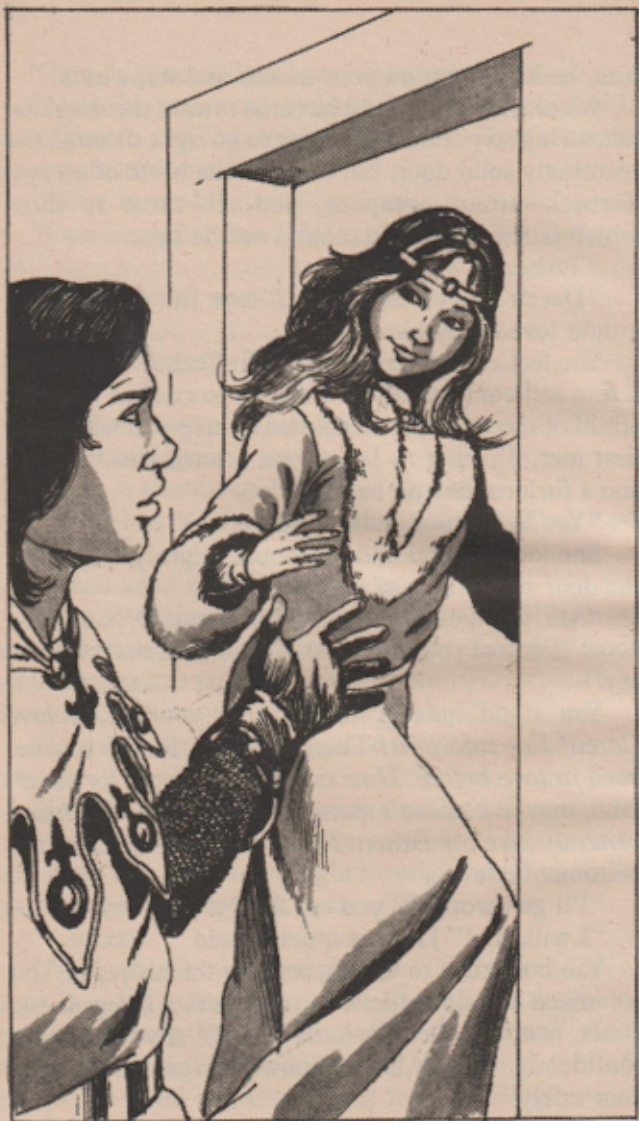
"Are you going to try to go through?" asks the door. "Each of you must search your own heart for the key."

You stand quietly, thinking to yourself, *I love Coren! I'm sure of it!* Then you add, *But I've never been in love before. How can I really know for sure? Well, maybe it doesn't matter if I'm not sure because I certainly love my father. The door didn't say it had to be romantic love.*

"I'll go through!" you say firmly.

"I will, too!" Jancy is quick to add.

You both turn to Coren, waiting for his reply. You see mixed emotions flicker across his face—happiness, doubt, fear, and then, he looks straight at you and says confidently, "I truly love. I know I can get through the door safely!"



His confidence warms you and gives you an additional feeling of security as you near the door. All your senses tell you that the door will be hard and unyielding as you step toward it. But with only a faint tingle in your leg, you walk right through the door.

"I'm through!" you shout. "And I'm all in one piece!"

"Wait for me!" And you see the halfling appear through the seemingly solid door.

Coren remains alone on the far side of the door.

Hearing his clothes rustle, you close your eyes in sudden fear. You don't want to see him turn to dust!

But Jancy says, "There's a foot . . . and a leg and a hand . . . Hello, Coren!"

You breathe again, open your eyes, and smile as Coren puts an arm around your shoulder and pulls you to him.

"I told you my love is true, Chandelle." As if he has been freed of all restraint by going through the door, he wraps you in his strong arms and kisses you firmly. All doubt gone in the joy of his kiss, you slide your arms up around his neck, wanting only to be as close to him as possible.

"Well, well," says Jancy, teasing. "What have we here? Chandelle? Coren? . . . Hey, we have a—"

"—quest to finish," says Coren, breaking away. "She's right," he adds, smiling down at you. "We'll resume this later."

"But there are only three of us for the quest now," says Jancy sadly.

"We can do it!" Coren says.

That new confidence is very attractive on him, you think.

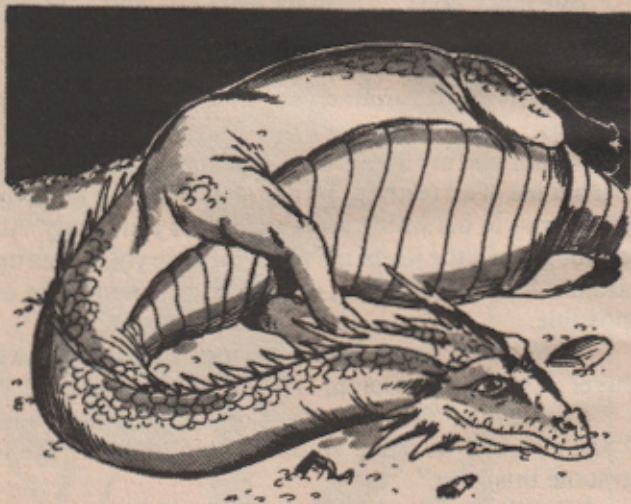
There is only one passage leading away from the magic door. "That magic door must be guarding something very important," you say as you walk away from it, your hand in Coren's.

Suddenly, you hear the sounds of sliding stones up ahead and stop abruptly.

"What do you think that is?" Jancy asks.

"Well, we won't know until we check it out," Coren says confidently.

Tiptoeing forward and peering around a large open door, you peek into a brightly lit room and see a huge gold dragon lying on a mountain of treasure.



You sneak back to the corridor to discuss your next move.

"She's gold!" you whisper, astonished.

"But who is she?" Coren asks.

"Why, the dragon, Raedl, of course!"

"Can't be," says Jancy. "Everyone has described her as red."

"Well, if Raedl's red, we've found another dragon," you say, worried. Then a horrifying thought comes to you. "Could we somehow be in the wrong dragon lair?"

"The fact that you're here at all is what's wrong," a voice booms down the passageway.

You stare at each other in horror.

"Well?" the voice booms again. "You know I'm here and I know you're there. So why don't you come on in?"

You shrug your shoulders. "It seems we have no choice," you conclude.

Making your way back to the doorway, the three of you cautiously step inside the room piled high with mountains of gold and jewels and beautiful things. Draped across the highest peak is a large, very fat golden dragon.

It burrows down into the treasure, blinks one eye at you, and asks, "Did you bring anything to eat?"

You stare wide-eyed up at the huge creature, think quickly about what you have with you, and say, "No, we don't have any food—"

"What about those jewels around your head?" it interrupts.

"Oh, no, not those," you say quickly, putting a protective hand to your ioun stones. "My father gave me those. They're magical. They wouldn't be good to eat. Oh, but wait a minute, one of the stones keeps you from needing to eat—would you like to have that one?"

"Needing to eat!" The dragon rears back in horror,

standing very tall above your head. "Needing to eat! Who said anything about **NEEDING** to eat? I **LIKE** to eat. I **WANT** to eat. I **ENJOY** eating!" Settling back down into the treasure mound, the dragon adds, "Well, if you didn't bring me anything to eat, why are you here?"

"She's trying to find her father," says Coren quickly. "And by the way, if you're not Raedl, who are you and what are you doing in Raedl's lair?"

"Inquisitive young man, aren't you?" The dragon sighs and peers at him lazily with one eye. "So much energy!" Then it sits up, preens itself, and says, "I'm Gilda. I'm here because Raedl, that dreadful creature— she gives a terrible name to dragons—forces me to drink only water from her magical pool. So I have to obey her and do the awful things she commands even though I'm basically a good dragon. She forces me to sit here guarding her treasure . . . and **NOT** even letting me eat it. She barely feeds me enough to keep a poor dragon alive!" A terrible moan escapes from her. "Oh, to be free again."

"Well, can't you just walk out?" asks Jancy.

"Oh, no-o-o-o-o." Gilda heaves her great belly into a slightly more comfortable position. "You see, that water really does work. If anyone threatens the treasure, I *will* kill to protect it." A terrible idea suddenly strikes her, and she raises her head. "You're not going to try to take this treasure, are you?"

"Oh, no!" you say hurriedly, as if such an idea were the farthest thing from your mind. "We're here just to find my father."

"Well, better not!" The dragon settles back down, relieved at your words. "Would he be the jeweler

the centaurs brought in the other day? Very talented, I understand."

"Yes!" you exclaim. "Do you know where Raedl keeps him?"

"You have to go through this room to get to him. And, of course," Gilda adds sadly, "I'm here to keep you from getting through this room."

"Is there nothing we can do?" you ask.

"Well, you can fight me—and I think it's only fair to tell you that I can be pretty fierce—or you can try to free me from Raedl's power."

*If you think the three of you can fight Gilda,
turn to page 61.*

*But if you'd rather try to free her,
turn to page 74.*

The tracks of the monsters who took your father certainly came into this cave—you've no doubt about that. Wyvella clearly lives in the cave system, so she must know something about the other inhabitants of the cave. Suddenly, you feel silly to refuse her offer just because you feel a bit jealous of the attention she is paying to Coren.

"Let's go with Wyvella," you say.

Wyvella, waiting patiently all this time, gives you a look that somehow makes you feel she knew what you would decide. "Follow me," she says to Coren, ignoring you.

Somehow, you end up walking behind the pair, but your anger gradually cools as you walk.

Each corridor you walk through has a special beauty that soon absorbs you. The colors, fabrics, paintings, statues—all are more luxurious than anything you've ever seen. And each room you pass is different. You see dormitories, kitchens, game rooms, even rooms filled with cages of small monsters. *Nurseries?* you wonder.

You ask Wyvella questions about the cave and its inhabitants, but her answers are always evasive. By the time her step slows, you know no more than you did when you started out—except that you are in a cavern of incredible complexity and fascination.

Wyvella finally turns and says, "Just ahead are the chambers of a ruby dragon."

"A dragon!" you exclaim. You and Coren look at each other wide-eyed.

But Wyvella continues matter-of-factly, "She—her name is Raedl—has a great deal of treasure."

Still stunned by the news that you might be dealing

with a dragon, you manage to ask, "But what about my father?"

"I'm sure he must be here somewhere in Raedl's rooms, perhaps working on the treasure. Though she has many, shall we say, trinkets, Raedl always desires more.

"But you'll have to find your father yourself. If Raedl knew I had led you into this section of the cave, she would take terrible revenge."

Then she warns you, "Don't expect finding your father to be easy. Raedl likes to keep what she has obtained. But, Chandelle, why don't you go look around? While you search, I'll keep Sir Coren company."

Burning at her words as well as the fact that Coren did not contradict them and say he was coming with you, you say swiftly:

"Good-bye, both of you. Thank you for all your help. I'll go find my father alone." Turn to page 72.

"Sir Coren, the successful conclusion of your first quest may be in sight. Let's go together and take my father away from his captor, the dragon!" Turn to page 153.

You look at the man—you hope it's him!—who took care of you and loved you, all alone after your mother's death. You've worked hard to learn his skills and have come to admire his ability to create beauty out of metal and stone. *Maybe this isn't my father, you think, but in case it is, I can't appear to doubt him just when I've found him. I'll go along with him now, but I'll be prepared for trouble.*

"Oh, yes, Father. Please help us. Raedl has caused trouble for years, and maybe we can put a stop to it."

A slight smile crosses your father's face as he steps to the door. "Follow closely, now," he says as he enters the passageway. You and Torbeck step behind him, with Jancy in the rear.

Walking swiftly, your father passes several chambers and turns a number of corners. At first you try to keep up, but each glimpse you get of another splendid chamber slows your feet.

Beside you, you hear Torbeck gasp as you reach the open door of a room piled high with treasure. Open golden caskets are scattered about randomly, their contents draped carelessly over their edges. Gems of every color and shape form a rainbow pile that reflects the light of torches into a million sparkles dancing on the ceiling and walls.

Torbeck grabs your hand as if feeling a deep need to share these wonders with you. "Look!" he says, and he points to a curtain of silver spun so fine that it looks like the softest silk.

But then your father touches your shoulder and says, a bit impatiently, "I thought you were searching for the dragon." And you turn to follow him again.

You take only a few steps before another sight

causes your feet to slow. On your right is a room of blue, a deep and lustrous blue that makes you feel you've found where summer nights are born. Still holding Torbeck's large hand, you enter the room in a silence born of awe. As Jancy follows, you hear your father say, "This room will do."

The sound of the door closing behind you brings you out of your awed reverie.

"The door!" you exclaim, looking around. "Where is it?" And indeed, when you study the wall through which you have just entered, there is no sign of the door.

"Magic!" says Jancy, her eyes wide. "I know we came in that side and now I can't even see a trace of a hidden door—and I'm a thief! I'm trained to see hidden doors!"

"Where's Father?" you ask suddenly.

"Was that your father, Chandelle?" Torbeck asks you quietly.

You pause a moment and then admit, "No, I don't think so. But . . . but I didn't want to challenge him. Think how hurt he would have been if he *had* been my father." Tears rush to your eyes as you add, "But will we ever find my real father?"

The knight draws you to him, and you lean your head lightly against his chest, seeking comfort. He smiles down at you and says, "We'll find him if he's here in this cavern, Chandelle."

"Can dragons do that? Appear as someone else?" asks Jancy.

"This dragon seems to be capable of many things," replies Torbeck. Then he shakes his head and adds, "Well, we'd better see about getting out of here."

You look around the room again, and this time see more details. The lapis lazuli blue stone of the walls contains a delicate tracery of gold running through it, forming the shapes of flowers, animals, and stars.

You're admiring the work closely when Jancy exclaims, "Doors! Three of them. I couldn't see them at first because the edges looked like part of the gold design."

Although you still find no trace of a door in the wall through which you entered, a search of the other three walls reveals a door in each. And each is marked in the center by a single huge gem—a deep blue sapphire, a glowing red ruby, and a splendid teardrop-shaped diamond.

"Well, we have no idea what lies beyond the doors. We could find the dragon, more treasure, your father, or even a way out," says Torbeck thoughtfully. Then he asks, "Which one shall we go through, Chandelle?"

If you choose the ruby door, turn to page 53.

If you choose the sapphire door, turn to page 13.

If you choose the diamond door, turn to page 68.

Torbeck's words, "Grow up, Chandelle!" burn in your mind. *I said I wanted to be like him!* you think angrily to yourself. *I said I wanted to be free to follow a whim, but right now I can't even tell my horse what to do! He's right!* And you talk yourself into pulling the two lavender stones from your pocket.

Released, the stones float back into the ring, the other stones making room for them.

"Nothing's happened," you say as Dawdle continues to plod patiently on, but then the path divides, and Dawdle comes to a halt.

"Go on, girl," you urge, but she looks from one path to the other, waiting for your hand on the reins.

Torbeck moves ahead of you and picks the path to the right. "I'll lead," he says.

And soon you realize that you still are not taking part in deciding where you're going.

Kicking your heels into Dawdle's side, you turn her off the path and go galloping away.

"Chandelle! Where are you going?" Torbeck shouts behind you.

"I'm following a whim!" you call back, diving into the brush. And soon you hear the others' horses following you.

But a few minutes later, you look around and realize that the scenery has changed. The open green forest has been replaced by trees that are mossy and gray. The ground beneath your horse's hooves is water-laden, and the air has begun to feel quite humid.

You rein in your horse and as the others draw up beside you, you ask, "Where are we?"

But before anyone can answer, you hear a gasp from Jancy. She's pointing up ahead of you, horrified.



A gray-green figure rises from the swamp ahead of you. In the dimness caused by the overhanging trees, all you can see at first is a spectral shape clothed in a rotting robe. But then a tree sways in the breeze and a shaft of sunlight hits the figure's face. Sheer terror shoots through you at the sight of rotting flesh hanging from a gray skull.

"A sea hag!" Torbeck's voice is hushed in fear.

The figure begins to shuffle toward you.

"Don't look at it!" shouts Jancy. "If you look one directly in the eyes, you will die."

You turn away only to see another sea hag rising from the water behind you. You're trapped!

Suddenly, a motion at the side of the swamp catches your eye. A tiny girl, not more than half Jancy's height, flutters out from behind a rock.

"It's a sprite, Chandelle!" says Jancy.

"A water sprite!" corrects the tiny girl as she flies toward you. "I can save you from these evil creatures if you come with me down into the pool."

"But we'll drown!" protests Torbeck, looking at his heavy armor.

"I won't let you drown," the sprite says, "but you must hurry if you're coming."

The sea hags move nearer, the putrid water sucking at their feet with each step they take.

What will you do?

You can trust the water sprite and go with her.

If you do, turn to page 70.

Or you can use your spell stone, hoping it will do something useful. Turn to page 43.

Your head whirls with things to consider—mermaids, the sage's plans, men who don't like water, small boats versus big boats.

Finally, you say firmly, defying anyone to disagree, "We'll be happy to go on your boat, Captain Seacleaver."

The captain quickly takes you farther along the pier to where you find a sad-looking boat tied up. The sails are tattered and the deck is filthy. You can barely read her name but finally make out *Garnet*.

As you and the others settle on deck, your dismay must show on your face, because the captain calls, "This is a working boat. There's no time for making her pretty, but she gets us where we want to go. We'll have you to the Dragon's Eye in no time."

"He seems to know too much," you whisper to the others.

"Maybe we should get off and go with the mermaids," suggests Coren.

"Nonsense!" says Torbeck. "At least this boat is large enough to get us somewhere. I can deal with that captain."

"Too late now, anyway," adds Jancy. "We've just cast off."

You settle back on a box and Coren joins you.

"Don't worry, Chandelle. We'll find your father soon."

"Oh, I hope so, Coren. Everything is happening so quickly and so strangely. All these strange people and creatures."

Realizing that he might take your words personally, you quickly add, "Oh, not you, Coren! Meeting you is one of the wonderful things that has happened."

You feel a need to touch him, to make him really believe that you care about him. You start to reach out, but then quickly withdraw your hand. *What if he doesn't feel the same way?* you wonder. *And aren't men supposed to show their interest first?*

Then the moment is lost because Captain Seacleaver looms over you. You draw back slightly and look up at the captain, watching his big beard rise and fall as he talks.

"We've run into a small problem, Mistress Chandelle. I know that you're worried about your father, but we'd like to make a quick stop at one of the islands we'll be passing on the way."

"But, Captain, my father—" you start to say when he interrupts.

"Now, I know I said we'd take you right to your destination, but as the master of this boat, I have to plan for tomorrow and the next day. It's business—don't worry your pretty little head over it."

*Do you reply, "Yes, I understand.
Go ahead, and make your stop."
If so, turn to page 152.*

*Or do you say firmly, "No, Captain.
We had an agreement to go right to our destination.
Please don't stop anywhere on the way."
Turn to page 65.*

"Why don't we split up, Coren?" you suggest. "You go with Wyvella down that passageway," you say, pointing in the direction from which Wyvella appeared. "I'll go explore the passage leading out the other side of this room."

Coren looks as though he's about to interrupt you so you rush on, "I've got my gems and my crystal ball to help me stay out of danger."



"No, Chandelle," Coren says firmly. "I said I would take care of you."

You breathe again, overjoyed that he has chosen you over this woman. But your joy is short-lived, because he then adds, "Come, Chandelle. Come with Wyvella and me. She has been good enough to volunteer to help. We certainly ought to accept her offer."

He looks so young and vulnerable, you think. But, if that's what he wants . . .

"No, Coren. But thanks for your help. You go on with Wyvella. I'll meet you later." You walk swiftly out of the room, turning down the second passageway.

At first, you see only stone corridors and, occasionally, a small room, each as luxuriously appointed as the first. At each corner of the passageway, you study your crystal ball to see if you are about to meet anyone, but the ball stays clear.

But then you turn a corner and the crystal ball takes

on a bright red hue. You know that you've entered a special area of the cave. Here the rooms look brighter and even more luxurious than those you've already passed. These are huge, with gem-studded floors piled high with soft cushions. Draperies of fine silk accented with tassels of real golden thread fall in graceful folds from the ceiling. You see everywhere little niches in the walls holding special items of treasure—jewelry, ornaments, statues—all composed of precious metals and gems. You inspect each with growing eagerness and professional appreciation.

Finally, you reach what appears to be the largest room of all. In it, you are drawn to the sight of a perfectly round sphere of gold, suspended in midair. You walk toward it, marveling at its incredible craftsmanship. As you gaze into its polished surface, you hear a shuffling sound, and in the ball, a red shape appears behind you.

You gasp and turn, terrified of what you see.

Facing you is a huge winged dragon the deep, blood-red color of a ruby. It towers above you, clearly enjoying the fear its presence induces in you.

"Coren, where are you?" you whisper, more as a wish than as a call for help.

"I've been keeping that young gentleman well entertained," says the dragon in a deep voice containing a great deal of feminine pride.

Then you recognize the look on the dragon's face—it's the same catlike look you saw cross Wyvella's face when she met Coren.

"Wyvella!" you cry. And for a moment, the dragon's face is replaced by that of the slant-eyed woman. When you blink, you see only the ruby dragon.

"I thought you might have sensed something devious about me earlier," the dragon says. "I can, of course, assume the identity of whomever I wish. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Raedl. I see you have been admiring my decorations."

"Yes, so many lovely things," you murmur, puzzled at why you're standing here conversing with a dragon!

"Here, let me offer you some hospitality," says Raedl, and it holds out a moisture-covered goblet surrounded by gold and silver threads intertwined in delicate patterns.

"N-no, thank you," you stammer, turning toward the doorway. But Raedl's foot reaches the door before you. You stop abruptly before running into the sharp talons turned toward you.

"Are you quite sure you wouldn't you like some water? It's very special water," it says, this time so firmly that you know there can be no answer but yes.

As you drink from the beautiful goblet, you feel the sense of urgency draining from you. Your eyes are spellbound by the goblet itself, and you know that you can live with such splendid things forever.

"All you have to do is whatever the magnificent Raedl asks of you," says the ruby dragon in a surprisingly gentle voice. "Come, we will go find your father, and you may work alongside him at his jeweler's bench. I understand that you have acquired your father's skill at making beautiful things. I have many gems that need proper care. That will be your job."

You feel nothing but pleasure at the dragon's concern for your well-being.

THE END

"How difficult can it be to find some toys for him?" you ask. "Let's try to help him and then he'll help us. That way, the captain won't lose his boat. All right, Mr. Giant—"

"CALL ME BORGAN!" he booms, loud but friendly.

"All right, Borgan, where do we find your toys?"

Without a word, the giant picks up all five of you, and tucks you all under one arm. You are crushed between Coren and Torbeck, the chainmail that each wears digging into you.

"THERE!" the giant says, and you're dropped onto a sandy beach, the breath knocked out of you.

Coren quickly kneels beside you, deep concern on his face. "Chandelle! Are you all right?"

The warmth of his caring seems to help you recover your breath. "Yes," you gasp. "I'm all right."

But then you hear, "Ouch! Get off my head!" as the captain growls at Torbeck. You smile up at Coren, the moment broken. He rises and holds out a hand to you. You hesitate for a second and then reach up. He lifts you off the ground and straight into his arms.

For a moment longer than necessary, he holds you securely in his strong arms, your face only inches from his. You yearn for him to lean down just a little more and kiss you. But then confusion and embarrassment show on his face, and he releases you.

"I'm glad you're all right," he says quickly.

"Yes, thank you," you reply, disappointed.

"Let's get this over with!" snaps the captain.

"Where are your toys, Borgan?" you ask the giant.

"HERE," he bellows, pointing into a small opening in the rock. "THEY WERE WASHED INTO

THAT HOLE AND THEY CAN'T GET OUT."

That's a funny thing to say—"can't get out," you think.

Torbeck leans into the hole and then calls out to you, fear in his voice, "They're iron golems! Two of them—fighting each other."

You run over and peer into the hole. Two life-sized iron figures are fighting over something small.

Then you hear their metallic voices saying, "It's mine . . . No, it's not! . . . Take that!"

Jancy looks and asks in an awed voice, "What would he be doing with golems for toys?"

"I don't know. I wouldn't have thought he had the ability to create magical soldiers like these," replies Torbeck thoughtfully.

"GET TOY SOLDIERS!" demands Borgan.

"All right, all right!" says Torbeck impatiently. "I don't know how they got in there—must have been during a storm when the sand washed away—but it sure isn't going to be easy to get them out now."

"Chandelle? Would one of those magic stones have a spell for this kind of situation?" Coren asks.

"I don't know," you reply, thinking quickly. "Maybe the spell stone will break the whole rock and free them or something like that."

Ignoring the giant staring at you, you close your eyes and concentrate on the purple spell stone in the ring circling your head. You sense the stone start to vibrate, and soon it gives off a faint glow.

"PRETTY COLOR!" you hear the giant say, but you concentrate on saying the words:

Stone of Fire, Stone of Light

REDUCE my problem; set it right!

"Oh, no!" you hear from behind you.

You open your eyes and see that the entire rocky mound—hole, golems, and all—has shrunk.

"Oh, no!" you echo. "I can't get them out of that tiny hole any easier than I could out of the large one!"

You kneel down and, listening carefully, you hear tiny squeals of "It's mine . . . No, it's not!"

"MY TOYS!" moans the giant. "WHAT DID YOU DO?"

You back swiftly away from the giant. "I'm very sorry, Borgan. I made a mistake," you apologize.

"YOU DIDN'T HELP ME! I WON'T HELP YOU!"

"Oh, no!" says Torbeck. "We'll be stuck here!"

Then you have an idea. "Borgan, now that the rock surrounding the toys isn't so big, maybe you can just break the rocky top off the cave and get your toys."

A large smile transforms the green storm giant's face. "I TRY," he says happily, and with a mighty flick of his forefinger, he knocks the top off the cave. He peers down into the small hole and a look of pleasure crosses his face. "OHHHHH. CUTE!" He picks up the tiny iron figures—still fighting with each other—and holds them on his hand.

"BORGAN LIKES THEM!" he exclaims. "NOW BORGAN WILL DO SOMETHING FOR YOU."

"Can you put our boat back in the water?" you ask.

"YES," he says, "BUT I WILL DO MORE—I WILL TELL YOU SOMETHING."

"What is it?" you ask, puzzled.

"JUST A MINUTE!" he bellows, and you all stand unspeaking as he trudges through the water to retrieve your boat. Then he lifts each of you gently

onto the deck—you, Coren, Jancy, and Torbeck.

"NOW!" says the giant. "THIS—" and he picks up the captain by his collar "—IS NOT A NICE MAN. THIS IS A BAD DRAGON."

"What do you mean?" you start to say, but then you see the captain, rage turning him redder and redder, gradually becoming a huge ruby-colored dragon. Everything that has puzzled you about the boat captain is explained. He was Raedl, making travel to her lair difficult for you ever since you started out! In a moment the red dragon almost covers the island, but the huge green figure of Borgan is taller. He holds Raedl back with one hand while he leans down toward your boat.

"GO NOW!" bellows the giant. "BORGAN WILL BLOW YOU TO THE DRAGON'S EYE AND KEEP DRAGON BUSY UNTIL YOU ARE SAFE." Then he thinks a minute and adds, "BUT BE CAREFUL—I WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP HER FOR VERY LONG."

"Safe!" exclaims Torbeck. "How can we be safe in Raedl's lair when she knows exactly where we are?"

"She's known all along," you say. "All we can do is move as quickly as possible and try to rescue my father while Borgan keeps Raedl occupied. Hang on."

In just moments, the storm giant's great wind blows the boat across the water until you reach a huge mound of rocks rising out of the sea. An eye-shaped hole in the rocky cliff at the top is the origin of the formation's name—Dragon's Eye.

"Now, how do we find the entrance to the lair?" Coren asks, staring down into the water.

Please turn to page 85.

Somehow you feel that it would be foolish to trust an unknown sprite with your life. You feel that the only safety is in the stones around your head. Quickly you concentrate on the deep purple stone. As one word seems to take over your consciousness—the word “hard” —you begin to mumble,

*Stone of Fire, Stone of Light,
Make it HARD for them to fight.*

In an instant, a sleet storm descends over the monstrous watery creatures. They're blinded by the sleet, and their water-soaked rags freeze instantly. Their advance hindered, you see sheer malevolence radiate from them toward you, a beauty they despise.

“Jancy! Torbeck! Let's go quickly, while they're caught!” you shout.

You see Jancy signal her horse to move, but it, too, is frozen in place by the magical sleet.

You feel Torbeck's hand grasp yours and for a moment the warmth of it gives you the illusion that you're not freezing, though the horse beneath you is paralyzed from the cold.

“What a way to go!” he exclaims. There's a strange exhilarated smile on his face that denies the terrible-ness of your plight.

“We're freezing to death and you're happy! What kind of a man are you, Sir Torbeck?” you ask.

“A man who lived by the adventure of following a whim and now may die by it. But, oh, Chandelle, I did have fun!”

And the two of you cling to each other, hoping that the spell will wear off before you reach . . .

THE END

"I agree, Jancy," you say, after thinking a moment. "She must know that the path will lead us to something helpful. And besides," you add, smiling at the halfling, "I think I trust Jancy's judgment of people."

"However," you add, "I'd better be prepared for anything!" And you pull the small leather pouch from your pocket.

"Jewels!" Torbeck exclaims as you pour the stones into your hand, and then he gasps as the stones start to drift upward and form a ring around your head.

"No. They're ioun stones!" Jancy says excitedly. "My grandmother had some!"

You tell the fighter and the halfling what you remember your father saying about the stones and the wizard who packed the spell stone.

"It's very powerful," you finish.

"You don't need me, then!" says Sir Torbeck.

"Yes, I do!" you say swiftly, suddenly afraid that he might pursue that thought. "I don't know what spells are stored in the stones, so I can't depend on them."

"Well, it's been my experience—" Jancy lowers her voice and pulls on an imaginary long gray beard—"that it never hurts to have a little bit of magic handy."

Torbeck looks taken aback and then explodes with laughter at the halfling. "Well, we certainly ought to accept the benefit of your vast experience, madam!"

Laughing, the three of you ride on into the woods.

As you ride, you talk easily together and soon Torbeck is telling tales of his exploits as a fighter.

"You are indeed a mighty warrior," you say smiling, when he finishes a tale of the Shimmering Mountains.

"I try to live by my oath as a knight," he says. You know that he's trying to sound modest, but that he is

proud of himself. *But that's all right, you think. He's done some very brave things.*

Just then Dawdle stumbles slightly, makes a small leap, and stops. Quieting her, you look down and see that she just avoided falling into a deep, smooth hole in the ground. A small mouse is running round and round inside the hole, trying to get out, but its tiny claws are unable to get a grip on the smooth sides. You hear it chitter in fear.

"Hold on, mouse," says Torbeck, dismounting quickly. The fighter bends down, scoops the tiny mouse up in his hands, and releases it into the grass. As it runs away free, you hear the fighter say gently, "Go on home, little mouse."

Then he looks up and sees you and Jancy watching him. The soft look on his face changes to one of confusion, and he hurriedly remounts his horse.

And he has a very gentle side, too, you think, adding to the mental image you're forming of this knight.

Suddenly, you hear a familiar flapping sound above you. The shadows of four winged lions pass over you as the sound is joined by that of rushing hooves nearby. Moving off the trail just in time, you stand by the side unnoticed by a troop of centaurs and satyrs charging past you, clearly headed back the way you came.

"They're heading toward Grantia's house!" you say. "The dragon must have sent them, just as she sent them to kidnap my father!"

"We've got to help her!" you shout to the others.

Torbeck turns to you and says, "Don't be silly! There are far too many creatures for us to fight."

"But we've got to try!" you exclaim.

"There's no virtue in jumping into a fight without

considering the odds for success, Chandelle," the knight says.

"Oh, you're just making an intellectual exercise of it!" you say angrily.

"I'm not!" he replies. "I'm trying to survive so we can go rescue your father!"

"Oh!" Your anger is replaced by shame.

"But what about Grantia, Chandelle? She's in trouble because she helped you," Jancy reminds you.

You hang your head, confusion almost overwhelming you. *Oh, what should I do?* you ask yourself as you look from Jancy to Torbeck. Both of them watch you expectantly.

*If you want to go back and help the witch,
turn to page 56.*

*But if you think you should go on looking for
the dragon's lair, turn to page 92.*

The next morning, the innkeeper directs you, Sir Torbeck, and Jancy to a small house located on the other side of town by the sea. Your knock is answered by a short, round man with a long gray beard but almost no hair on his head. Completely immersed in a large book he holds in one hand, he doesn't seem to realize that he has opened the door. He turns a page while you wait in silence.

Finally, you say politely, "Excuse me, sir . . ."

He looks up blankly, shakes his head as if to clear it, and says, "Oh! More visitors! Oh, dear!" Reluctantly, he lowers his book. "Well, how may I help you?"

Introducing yourself and the others, you explain that the innkeeper said he might be of assistance in locating Raedl, the red dragon.

"Might I? Oh . . . yes, I suppose I might. Come in. Please. Come in to the house of Marengall."

You walk directly into a library. In fact, the whole house seems to be a library dedicated to dragon lore. *He must have every book written on the subject*, you think, also noticing pictures, maps, scrolls, and diaries.

On one wall is a chart of all the different kinds of dragons. Your eye is caught by a large one labeled "Red dragon: *Draco conflagratio horribilis*."



"Ahhhh," says the sage, seeing you stare. "You have an acute eye. That dragon you are looking at is

indeed the same type as Raedl—a horrible creature!”

“I probably know more about Raedl, the red dragon, than anyone else on this earth. All these books, maps, and diaries,” he says, spreading his arms to indicate the entire room, “help me understand her. I’ve interviewed travelers, tracked down stories, made maps of places where she’s been sighted.”

While he drones on enumerating all the things he’s done, you hear a knock on the door. Realizing that the sage is too engrossed in his own storytelling to notice the sound, much less respond to it, you go to the door yourself and open it.

“Coren!” you cry, your surprise matching the young knight’s. “What are you doing here?”

Assuming an expression of determination, Coren says, “I thought it over and decided to add my assistance to whatever help you might find in town. I followed you, hoping to find you before you left to search for your father.”

Determination changes to confusion as he adds, “But I didn’t expect to find you opening the door here.”

You laugh with delight, pleased to know that he followed you and will come along after all.

Suddenly, your reunion is interrupted by, “Who’s this? Who’s this? Another knight seeking the red dragon? This must be my busy day.” Marengall ushers Coren into his home, and you introduce him to the two knights and Jancy.

Coren greets Sir Torbeck coolly, a twinge of jealousy evident in the younger knight’s hardened jaw.

Taking advantage of this break in Marengall’s litany of accomplishments, you hurry to say, “Your study

of this dragon is quite impressive. In fact, that's why we're here—to ask for your help in locating my father. He's been missing since yesterday."

"Your father?" the old sage repeats.

"Yes," you reply. "He may be a prisoner of this Raedl."

"Ah, well, a captive of the dragon," he says, thoughtfully scratching his beard.

Then he looks up and says, "Of course, I can help you. Come over to this wall, and we'll discuss how you should go."

You all stand before a huge map that covers one wall. It has hundreds of notations written on it, written so small that you can barely decipher them.

"Now, Mistress Chandelle, what all these notations refer to is a back entrance to Raedl's lair underwater, hidden in some huge rocks that rise out of the sea. The rocks are called the Dragon's Eye."

Torbeck stirs restlessly and says, "The sea? Uh, I haven't had much to do with the sea. After all, I'm a knight, not a sailor."

"There's nothing to be concerned about," says the sage kindly. "I've got a small boat down at the pier, and I happen to have an acquaintance with some helpful folk of the sea. Been able to do them a favor from time to time. I'm sure they'll help you if I ask them."

You, the fighters, and the halfling follow the sage out into his back garden, which leads down to the water's edge where a small boat is tied up to the pier. Marengall stops a moment to ring a tiny wind chime mounted on a piece of driftwood. A beautiful tinkling note sounds across the water.

As you step onto the pier, there's a turbulence in

the water, and a moment later several figures emerge.

Mermaids! you think. Amazed, you stare at the beautiful creatures with the heads, arms, and torsos of women but the tails of fish in place of legs. Their scales are a brilliant iridescent green.

"This is Antha and her friends," Marengall says, gesturing toward one mermaid whose hair is darker than the others. A ripple of giggles spreads through the group, sounding very like the chime the sage rang. Torbeck stands awestruck, staring at the mermaids and murmuring to himself, "Never thought to see . . ."

When the sage explains to the mermaids that you need to be shown the Dragon's Eye, Antha, clearly the spokesperson of the group, says, "Don't worry. We'll see them safely there."

Marengall turns to you and says, "Now, I must get back to the house. I'm expecting a visit from an adventurer who swears he injured Raedl in an encounter. I don't believe him for a minute, of course, but you never can be sure. Good luck, my dear. I hope you find your father." He starts to walk back to his house but turns once to add, "Oh, and please, won't you let me know what happens on your quest? I must keep clear records."

As you wave your agreement, Jancy tugs on Torbeck's arm and whispers, "Can you row a boat?"

The mermaids' giggles spread across the water again. "There's no need to row," Antha says, laughing. "We'll pull the boat for you."

"A mermaid-powered boat!" exclaims Jancy, but you notice that she steps warily into the boat. Sir Torbeck follows her, clearly not at ease. Coren carefully enters the boat and turns to assist you.

You're just about to join them in the small boat that the mermaids are preparing to pull when a stranger walks toward you along the shore.

A big man with a rusty beard that fails to soften his fierce face, he's dressed in a blue jacket with the sleeves cut off at the shoulder. A patterned shirt with billowing sleeves is gathered at the waist by a belt from which hangs a lethal-looking saber.

He stops by the boat, feet spread apart, as if to brace a mountain. Smiling, he says, "Good day! I understand you might be in need of a boat."

You shake your head, but he goes on, "I've got a fine big one, just over there, and I'll be happy to take you to your destination in much more comfort than in this—" He sneers at the boat as if it were a piece of flotsam. "—this wench-driven scow."



Antha rears angrily out of the water, virtually standing on her tail. "Oh, really!" she sneers. "And why should anybody trust you and that tub you sail?" She flicks her tail, sending water into his face.

"Please, sir, who are you?" You finally manage to interrupt their heated exchange.

"Forgive me, pretty lady. Captain Seacleaver at your service." He bows to all four of you, and winks at Jancy. "My boat and I carry goods to the islands in these parts. And for a small fee I'll be glad to take you to the Dragon's Eye."

"How did you know we wanted to go to the Dragon's Eye?" you ask.

"Oh, word gets around, Mistress Chandelle, especially near an inn," he says. "You'll certainly be a lot more comfortable on the *Garnet*, my boat."

Jancy leaps from her seat and bows back to him. "I think you've come just in time!" she says, relief in her voice.

Sir Torbeck clears his throat and says, or tries to say, "I, uh, I think this little boat . . . too close to water . . ." He takes hold of himself and says firmly, "I think we should go in the captain's boat."

"Coren?" you ask.

He peers up at the captain standing above him on the pier and replies, "I'm happy with the sage's arrangements."

Do you want to ride in the small boat pulled by Antha and her friends? If so, turn to page 79.

Or would you feel safer on the bigger boat run by Captain Seacleaver? Turn to page 34.

You stare at the ruby door and say, "Red is the dragon's color. She'll probably be behind that door."

"Yeah, waiting to eat us!" adds Jancy.

"But maybe that's what we're supposed to think," says Torbeck, drawing his sword.

Making up your mind, you head for the door bearing the glowing ruby.

Opening the door cautiously, you see nothing but an empty passage.

Torbeck walks beside you down the stone passage. Jancy follows, running to keep up, until suddenly she whispers, "Chandelle? Torbeck?"

"What is it?" you ask.

"Look behind us!" the halfling says.

You and Torbeck turn and see, walking about fifty feet behind you, a winged lion!

Then your attention is caught by another sound in the distance—a familiar tap of metal on metal.

"That's Father!" you exclaim. And ignoring the presence of the lion, you turn and trot down the passage, drawn by the sound of the tapping hammer.

You pass an open room, taking just a moment to glance inside. And there are centaurs and satyrs, eying you as you pass. You sense them enter the passage and join the lion stalking you from behind.

Torbeck keeps turning and checking the rear, moving his sword back and forth as he walks.

"I can't handle them all, Chandelle," he warns.

"I know. But let's get to Father."

You turn a corner in the passage and on your right see an open chamber where a tall, thin man bends over a workbench, hammering on a golden goblet.

"Father!" And this time there's no doubt as the

man turns in his chains and opens his arms to you.

"Chandelle! My beloved daughter!"

For the moment you enjoy the old familiar comfort of your parent's arms, but then Torbeck says, "Chandelle!" There's a dreadful urgency in his voice.

You look up to see the doorway completely filled with creatures, their eyes glowing with hate.

Your father whispers, "They're the dragon's slaves. Most of them are normally good—unicorns, winged lions, centaurs—but somehow she keeps them under a magic spell that makes them vicious. They won't let us leave!"

"Can't we break the spell?" Jancy suggests.

"My spell stone can't," you reply.

Your father glances up at the ioun stones around your head and his face lights up in excitement.

"The spell stone won't, no," he says, "but the lavender stones will. Where are they?"

For a moment, you don't understand what he means. Then you remember the two stones that Grantia the witch had told you to put away when she placed Dawdle under the spell.

Quickly, you pull the leather pouch from your pocket, open it, and let the two stones drift up to join the ring around your head.

Almost instantly, the animals standing in the door begin to relax. The two unicorns start to nuzzle each other. The centaurs look at each other in amazement, turn, and trot back down the corridor.

Suddenly, they freeze in place as into the passageway comes Raedl, the red dragon.

She roars as she sees them, clearly signaling for them to get back to their duties. But the creatures, now

freed from her spell, turn on her and start to roar back.

The dragon, enraged by this reaction from creatures who have docilely obeyed her for years, spits fire down the passage. The animals use the cover of the fire to dash forward and attack Raedl.

"Hurry!" says your father. "Free me and we can get out of here while Raedl is occupied with her former slaves."

Torbeck's mighty sword breaks your father's chains and you all scurry down the corridor away from the cornered dragon and her angry minions.

Jancy dances ahead, singing gaily, "We've done it!"

As the sounds of the battle behind you fade away, Torbeck stops you with a hand on your shoulder. "Chandelle!"

You turn your face up to him, looking at him squarely.

"We've finished the quest for your father," he says, placing his arms around your waist. Your hands slip up behind his neck as he adds, "But we haven't finished the quest for ourselves, have we?"

You smile at him and shake your head no.

A thoughtful look crosses the knight's face. "You know I'm a fighter, Chandelle. That means that I must go where I'm needed when I'm needed—"

You interrupt, laughing, and say, "As well as where you *want* to go when you want to go!"

He laughs and hugs you saying, "That's true, too."

As you walk out of the dragon's lair together, you know that somehow the knight will play an important role in your life, in your love, in your future.

THE END

As you try to decide, your mind in turmoil, you hear the sound of a bird shrieking as it passes overhead. It sounds like a woman's cry!

"I've got to go back and help Grantia!" you exclaim in anguish. "It's my fault the dragon is after her!"

"She's a witch, Chandelle," says Torbeck impatiently. "She can take care of herself with her magic."

"Maybe . . . but maybe not. I've got to find out." You kick your heels into Dawdle's side and gallop quickly through the forest. The others follow.

You halt abruptly behind the trees screening the witch's small house and dismount. The sounds coming from the house are horrible, and you're suddenly reluctant to find out what is making them.

You watch Torbeck draw his sword. Even Jancy has a little jeweled dagger that she draws out of her boot. Suddenly, you feel useless and wonder why you forced the others to come here.

Seeing you hesitate, Torbeck leans down and asks, "What's wrong, Chandelle?"

"I . . . I've never used magic before except to protect me. And I don't even know what the spell stone will do. What if it does something awful? What if it doesn't work?"

"But what if it does work?" he says gently. "Then you'll have helped the witch you came to save. Besides, that wizard who packed the spell stone wouldn't have put in spells that might hurt him."

"You're right," you agree, and you all step into the clearing around Grantia's house.

Centaur, satyr, a couple winged lions, even a werebear or two storm the house, screaming and snarling in fury. Grantia stands visible through the open

door, but none of the creatures get near her. When one centaur dashes forward, it seems to hit an invisible barrier, sparks fly, and it retreats, howling. Now you realize that the horrible noise the creatures are making contains as many howls of pain as screams of rage. But the monsters surround the witch, and she is trapped within her own invisible cage.

"I'll get them away from her," says Torbeck, dashing forward with his sword ready. He heads toward the nearest centaur, which turns at the sound and attacks the fighter with a heavy oaken club.

"Torbeck!" you shout. Then, knowing you can't really do anything to help him unless it's with magic, you stand still and concentrate your thoughts on the purple stone in the ring of stones circling your head.

Your mind closes out the sounds of the creatures, and as you start to concentrate on the world of power within you, the purple stone starts to vibrate and glow. From somewhere the word "hold" enters your mind, and you feel yourself repeating the words:

Stone of Fire, Stone of Light,

HOLD the creatures, end this fight!

You continue to concentrate until you realize that the sounds around you have lessened. When you open your eyes, you see that all the centaurs and satyrs—the part-human creatures—are standing absolutely still, as if frozen into place. The other creatures continue to leap and scream, but without direction from their leaders, they move about aimlessly now. Soon they turn and run away.

You hurry to Grantia's side . . . and bump painfully off her invisible shield.

"Oh, I'm sorry, my dear," says the witch. She

makes a slight gesture and reaches her hand out to you, her actions no longer hindered by the unseen barrier.

"That was my glyph of warding. I was just packing to go when I heard Raedl's horde coming. I constructed the invisible shield so that I could continue packing while it held them back. But then one of the centaurs was clever enough to try to get around behind it and I had to construct it all around me. There I stood in a cage of my own making until you came along and stopped those nasty creatures from attacking me.

"Oh . . . excuse me a moment. I'll just dispose of those centaurs and satyrs you so kindly put out of action for me." She goes to the door, mumbles a few words, and then holds her hands flat, with their thumbs touching. Sheets of flame spurt from her fingers, striking the creatures. They stir, turn, and go howling off into the woods.

"There!" Grantia says with satisfaction. "Now, my dears, what can I do to thank you for coming back to help me?"

"No thanks are necessary," you say. "But is there any way that you can help me rescue my father?"

"Well . . ." The witch thinks a moment. "I could put your horse under a spell, one that would let me put into her mind a picture of the way to the dragon's lair. The route is much too complicated to try to describe it to you. The only drawback to the spell is that she won't go anywhere but along the route I give her, so you'll just have to go along, no matter what else happens."

Torbeck and Jancy wait for your decision. You find yourself a little reluctant to leave your destination to a spellbound horse, but, you realize, you really don't have much choice.

"All right, please put Dawdle under a spell."

"Fine. But you'll have to remove the lavender-colored stones from your ring of stones."

"Why?"

"Because those are stones that absorb spells. They could remove the spell I put on Dawdle, and then you might be lost in the woods."

You reach up and remove the two lavender stones from the ring around your head. The other stones move around until they are evenly spaced again. You put the two you've removed back into the leather pouch.

Grantia places her hand gently on Dawdle's nose, makes a few gestures, and murmurs some words to which Dawdle seems to listen intently. Then the horse nods and the witch pats her nose again.

"Just follow Dawdle's lead, my dears. She's a fine horse and she'll get you there safely."

Remounting, you wave to the witch and give your horse her lead. Torbeck on his charger and Jancy on Gooseberry ride side by side behind you.

As you ride, you have no choices to make—Dawdle just walks on and on, never seeming to hesitate.

After an hour or so, Sir Torbeck stirs restlessly and says, "I've done lots of things before, but I've never followed a spellbound horse!"

"There's got to be a first time for everything," Jancy says. "And you must like first times, Torbeck—you've done so many new things!"

"I do. I don't like to be doing the same thing over and over—that's a dull way to live!" the fighter says.

"But somebody has to do the ordinary things," you protest, turning your head.

"Maybe. But it doesn't have to be me. I want to be able to go when the urge comes over me. I want to be free to follow a whim!"

I'd like to be like that, you think to yourself as you ride on in silence.

Then you, too, begin to be uneasy about letting your horse make all the decisions. Each time the path splits or turns, Dawdle just keeps plodding on as if she had a map in her head. You do nothing.

In a little while, Torbeck says, "I can't take this any more! I feel useless just sitting here following Dawdle wherever she goes. How do we know the witch actually gave her the right directions? Grantia might even be a friend of the dragon's!"

"No!" you exclaim.

"Well, I don't like being controlled by an enchanted horse!"

"Do you want to go, now that the urge has come over you?" you ask, mimicking his own words.

"No, of course not! But I want to remove the spell. You've got those lavender stones—use them! Grow up, Chandelle. Let's get control of our own actions again."

"Don't do it, Chandelle," Jancy says. "I know Grantia. She's helping us. We'll get to the dragon's lair. Just be patient."

*If you want to trust the witch
and keep letting Dawdle lead, turn to page 90.*

*If you want to follow Torbeck's advice
and free Dawdle from her spell, turn to page 31.*

"That fat dragon is too lazy to do much damage. Let's fight her!" urges Jancy in a whisper.

"Everything she said made it sound as if she didn't really want to be here guarding the treasure. Surely she won't fight very hard," says Coren.

"All right," you agree. "We'll fight."

As Coren draws his sword and advances toward the dragon, Jancy begins to tiptoe around to the back of the treasure mound.

Gilda scratches her fat belly and rumbles, "I may be fat. I may not really want to be here, but I do what is required of me!" And she exhales, turning her head so she reaches all corners of the room.

"Duck!" you shout, expecting a sheet of flame to spread over your heads. But instead, Gilda has breathed an awful green gas.

As the noxious vapor envelops you and you begin to lose consciousness, all you can see is a forlorn golden face.

"I wish you hadn't done that," says a weary voice.

THE END

If I tell Coren I like, maybe love, him, you think, he's going to feel he has to say something, too—and maybe he won't mean it!

Oh, you moan to yourself. It's no good! I can't say anything to Coren!

"Let's go find my father," you say aloud, heading toward a tunnel opening on the side of the room.

Torbeck walks in front, his sword ready to protect you as you pass through the mazelike cavern. When Coren starts to walk right behind you, you quickly pull Jancy in ahead of him. Coren looks at you quizzically, shrugs, and brings up the rear.

Alert for danger, you explore the passageways and chambers of Raedl's lair.

Finally, you hear something, a quiet tap-tap-tap.

"Wait, Torbeck!" you whisper urgently.

The knight stands still and all rustling noise ceases. "What is it?"

"It sounds like my father's hammer, working on gold!"

As the sound comes again, you head toward it, excitement building. Everyone walks faster, eager to reach a successful end to this quest. But then you pass an open door and Torbeck stops abruptly. Wide-eyed, he whispers, "Look at that treasure—mountains of it!"

The four of you crowd around the door, but you feel the tapping sound draw you like metal to a magnet. Walking quickly, you continue to follow the sound just around the corner to an open door, the others close behind.

"It's got to be him!" you say to yourself as you enter. And there before you is a tall, thin man leaning over a workbench, inspecting a golden tiara.

"Father?"

The man turns. "CHANDELLE!" He tries to rush toward you but is caught by a chain attached to his leg and to a loop in the wall.

You rush into his arms and as he hugs you, you know that this is no trick of the red dragon's, that you have, in truth, found your father.

The two knights quickly break the chain on your father's leg with their heavy swords. "Do you know where the dragon is, sir?" asks Torbeck.

"I haven't seen or heard her today," your father says thoughtfully.

"Maybe we can get out of here without having to meet her," you suggest.

"I'd like to take a look at that treasure first," Torbeck says.

"Me too," Jancy pipes. They both dash out the door.

Your father laughs. "I don't blame them. And you, young knight," he says to Coren, "are you here for the treasure, too?"

Coren looks at you as if waiting for you to say something. You want to rush in and say, "No, Father, he's here because he loves me and I love him!" But you don't have the courage.

And so the moment of silence draws on painfully, with your father looking puzzled, until Coren says quietly, "Yes, sir, I guess I am." He goes to the door, turns back and looks at you with an unreadable expression on his face.

"Let's get out of here, Father!" you say urgently, now wanting to be as far from Coren as you can be.

"All right, Chandelle," he agrees quietly, a look of

understanding on his face. "Let me just go and ask if any of the others want to go now."

He is gone only a few minutes and then returns to to say, "They'll divide the treasure and then find their own way out. Come on, we'll go this way."

As you follow your father through the passageways, an ache in your heart increases with each step that separates you from Coren.

Once, you wonder at the freedom with which you are walking through Raedl's lair. Where is she? And why don't you see other creatures? But then the growing coldness around your heart consumes your thoughts again.

Suddenly, your father exclaims, "Fresh air! I smell fresh air!" and he hurries into a chamber where a number of passages meet. And there before you is an opening to the outside. It seems forever since you've seen trees and grass!

You run toward the opening, at last feeling something other than a heavy heart.

But then the glimpse you had of daylight is gone and in its place is the evil face of a very angry ruby dragon!

You turn to run back the way you came and run head-on into the guardian naga.

"You should have kept your promise to come back and help me," it says.

Trapped between a dragon and an angry snake, you cry out, "Father!"

But you know you have reached . . .

THE END

The captain looks surprised at your resistance, and for a moment you wonder if you should have given in.

But then Coren says, "Wise decision! We can't delay our search for your father."

You feel yourself beaming with pleasure at his approval.

Stalking angrily away, the captain says something to the helmsman, and the boat turns slightly. As the captain disappears through a hatch, the boat continues on course.

Turning to Coren, you ask, "Do you think we'll be able to find my father?"

"I wish I could say 'of course,' Chandelle. But you're too smart to believe me if I did. I just don't know. All we can do is try. If there really is an entrance to the dragon's lair we're headed toward, and if the dragon didn't do something awful to your father right away . . ."

"So many 'ifs!' " you say sadly, interrupting him.

But then you see the stricken look on his face, as if he's sorry he was so negative, and you say softly, "Thank you, Coren. I don't want to hear pretty things when deep down I know they just aren't true."

"Maybe not now, Chandelle. But I have lots of pretty things I want to say to you at another time." Then he looks startled at having spoken so boldly and walks swiftly away to talk to the helmsman.

Hugging his words to your heart, you pull your cloak about you and sit back to wait out the ride.

Half-listening to Jancy joke with Torbeck while they sit on the deck playing a game with small tokens, you suddenly become aware of a faint singing sound. You shake your head, but the sound doesn't go away.

"Coren!" you call. "What is that sound?"

He turns and you see a preoccupied, even enthralled look on his face as he, too, listens to the distant sound. Finally, he says, "That's the sweetest music I've ever heard."

You listen again and realize that the high sound is a wonderful singing. It seems to be coming from a large mass of rocks looming ahead on your right. You notice a red glow hanging over it.

"Jancy! Torbeck! Listen!" They both perk up and listen.

"It's pretty," Jancy says, uninterested. "Come on, Torbeck. It's your turn."

But the knight is sitting straight up, straining to hear more of the sweet sound. "Wonderful!" he murmurs.

Coren and Torbeck rise to their feet and walk toward the helmsman. You see them talk briefly. The helmsman shakes his head no, and then, to your astonishment, Torbeck knocks him down, grabs the wheel, and turns the boat toward the rocky island.

Springing to your feet, you call, "Torbeck! What are you doing? . . . Coren?"

Neither man turns toward you, but you hear Coren exclaim, "The singing! The wonderful singing!"

Looking ahead, you can just make out some creatures on the rocky island. They look a little like women, you notice, but then you realize that your boat is heading right toward the rocky island and the air is getting warmer and warmer!

"Torbeck, please turn the boat back!" you say, grabbing his arm. But he just shakes you off and holds the wheel firmly in place.

"Hey, what's going on?" asks Jancy.

You think a moment and then say, "It must be the singing! The men hear the singing and are drawn to it."

"Oh, that's silly!" says Jancy, laughing. "It's just singing—nice, but nothing special."

"Well, it seems to charm the men, and if we're going to reach the dragon's lair, we'd better do something—and quick!"



"We can't stop them listening," jokes Jancy. But then her small face turns thoughtful. "Or can we? How about putting something in their ears so they can't hear it?"

Otherwise, I could pull out my magic stones, you think.

"Whatever we do, we better hurry," says Jancy. "We're getting awfully close to that island!"

*If you want to put something in the men's ears,
turn to page 93.*

*If you think you should use some magic
to stop the creatures from singing,
turn to page 81.*

You've always been attracted to diamonds and their mysterious, ever-changing lights, so you turn impulsively toward the door marked with one.

"Wait, Chandelle!" Torbeck says, and he moves ahead of you, his sword drawn. Jancy, wanting to stay close, scurries up and holds onto your cloak. Together, the three of you push open the door.

The sight that greets your eyes is startling. You've entered a room of mirrors, not just lined with mirrors but decorated with them, so that they hang from the ceiling, jut out from the walls, meet you as you try to take a step.

Everywhere you turn you see five, six, seven, eight images of yourself and your friends . . . and a large ruby-colored dragon who appears behind you!

Jancy, her small dagger flashing before her, jumps up and down, turning this way and that, trying to locate the ruby dragon herself instead of a reflection of her.

The huge red beast seems to fill the entire room. Torbeck, mighty knight that he is, looks tiny against the huge dragon, his sword a mere needle. You want desperately for him not to be hurt, for him to live and become a permanent part of your life.

You close your eyes so you won't be distracted by the many sparkling images that dance around the room. All your thoughts concentrate on the small purple stone that vibrates in midair near your head.

Suddenly, you break your own concentration as you realize that the unpredictable stone just might give you a spell that works against everyone, not just the dragon. Instead of attacking Raedl, you might be endangering yourself, the knight, and the halfling!

But then Torbeck lunges toward the dragon and a mighty roar thunders through the mirrored chamber.

"TRY TO HARM ME, WILL YOU, HUMAN?" Raedl's voice sets the mirrors to shaking.

You can stand it no longer. You must try!

Concentrating on the purple stone, you clear your mind of all thoughts but the need for a single spell directed against the red dragon. Appealing to the power in the stone, you chant your words:

*Stone of Fire, Stone of Light,
Stop the DRAGON; relieve my plight!*

Your hand begins to tingle. Beside you, Jancy gasps, and you open your eyes to see why.

A brilliant beam of purple light radiates from your finger. Your heart leaps with joy as you realize that you did indeed get your wish—a spell that can be directed right at the dragon instead of affecting everything in the room!

Struggling to maintain your concentration, you direct the beam at the huge red shape in front of you. But instead of striking the dragon, the beam hits Raedl's image in a mirror and, like her image, is reflected back to you.

The beam that you have drawn from the magic spell stone strikes you and turns you to glass. It's then reflected back and forth, around the room, until you are joined in eternity by a strong and handsome knight and a small, pert halfling thief. Over you all towers a huge, winged dragon of ruby glass, rage frozen on its face forever.

THE END

"I don't want to stay here any longer!" You shriek in terror, as the sea hags reach out toward you. "Please save us!" you cry to the tiny winged sprite.

Torbeck, already dismounted, grabs your hand, pulls you off your horse and over toward the sprite. You stand at the side of a small clear pool.

"Close your eyes and step in!" the sprite urges. You hope that you've made the right decision and step into the water holding Torbeck's hand.

You sink quickly, brought down by the weight of Torbeck's armor. *Too quickly?* you wonder, panicked for a moment. But then you realize that although you're sinking, you're breathing! The water isn't going in your nose.

Just as you've begun to marvel at what is happening, you realize you're no longer falling. You're still moving in water, but you can't tell in which direction.

Then you pop to the surface of the water, still holding Torbeck's hand. The shock of being back in the air sends the three of you bobbing and splashing around, laughing with relief.

"That looks like fun!" says a voice, and your eyes widen in astonishment.

"Coren!"

The young knight stands on a sandy beach, smiling down at the three of you in the water. You're surprised at the pleasure you feel in seeing him.

Like a hummingbird, the water sprite flutters in the air by your shoulder and says, "You're safe now."

"Oh, yes! And thank you."

"Good-bye!" She calls as she disappears back into the water.

"Chandelle! I'm so glad to see you," Coren says.

You laugh, climbing out of the water. "How did you get here?" you ask.

"I decided I would help you after all. So I asked in town about the strange behavior of the creatures around here and learned that the sage, who lives in that house back there, knows a lot about a red dragon."

For the first time since you stepped onto dry land, you realize you have emerged from the sea bordering the town where you met Torbeck and Jancy.

"He seemed to think the dragon might be holding your father captive," Coren is saying, "and agreed to send me to a back entrance of her lair with the help of some mermaids."

"Mermaids?" Torbeck exclaims in astonishment.

Coren looks at the older knight somewhat coldly and asks, "Who are you?"

Quickly, you introduce Coren to Torbeck and Jancy.

"Do you think the mermaids will take us?" you ask.

"Of course they will," Coren assures you. "I've already met them, and they seem very agreeable."

As you talk, you notice a turbulence in the water behind Coren and watch in amazement as several beautiful mermaids emerge glistening from the water.

Once Coren introduces you to Antha, their leader, and you tell her your story, she agrees to take you all.

Antha points to a small boat tied up at a pier and says, "That will be your mode of transportation. Step in and we will pull you."

Looking a bit leery of the slightness of the craft, Torbeck steps into the boat, and the others follow.

Please turn to page 51.

Well, you think, if he's so easily turned from the quest he agreed to undertake, I'll just have to go on without him. I can do it!

Searching in your crystal ball before turning a corner or passing a room, you safely move deeper into the cave. Your astonishment at its beauty distracts you from your fear at being alone.

Suddenly, a sound halts you in mid-step. It's a metallic tap-tap-tap that sounds very familiar.

"Father!" you exclaim aloud. You've heard that sound all your life! It's the sound of his goldsmith's hammer on gold.

You run toward the sound and finally reach an iron door slightly ajar. The tap-tap rings clearly through the doorway.

"Father!" you call, pushing the door open. And your heart stops.

There in front of you stands Wyvella, a look of evil pleasure on her face.

"Oh, Chandelle!" you hear your father say sadly. You turn and see both Coren and your father, chained to the wall. And at a workbench nearby, a small goldsmith's hammer hangs in midair, tapping lightly on a golden goblet with no human hand guiding it.

"Just a little magic to lure you here, my dear," says Wyvella. And then she adds, "Now, shall we get better acquainted?"

And as you watch, wide-eyed with fear, the mysterious raven-haired woman transforms into a huge ruby-colored dragon.

"You may call me Raedl."

THE END



"There's only three of us, and Coren's the only real fighter. We can't fight her," you whisper. "But I've got an idea."

Then, aloud, you say, "Gilda, how often does Raedl make you drink water from the magical pool?"

"Several times each day. Salty things, especially garnets and emeralds, make me very thirsty."

The magic that holds them spellbound must be renewed regularly, you reason to yourself. Then you say to Gilda, "Suppose I give you a magic gem that keeps you from getting thirsty. If you avoid drinking the water you're given and pour it away several times, I bet you'd soon be out from under Raedl's control."

"Do you really think so?" Gilda shows the first spark of lively enthusiasm you've seen in her.

"Yes, I do. But you would have to promise to let us get safely by to find my father."

"If only I could be free! . . . Yes, please, let me have the magic gem. I promise!" the dragon says fervently. Then she adds, "If I got out of here, I could be a real dragon again! Oh, give me the gem, please!"

You reach up and remove a clear, spindle-shaped gem from the ring circling above your head. Instantly, the other gems spread out to form a balanced ring of protection around you. As you hand the stone to Gilda, you suddenly feel hungry and thirsty yourself. But you know that the end of your quest is finally in sight.

"Here you are, Gilda. Please don't let Raedl know that you're not really thirsty. She might wonder what's wrong."

As you, Coren, and Jancy walk around the great mound of treasure, half afraid that Gilda might change her mind, you see her watching the one clear stone cir-

cling her head. Hoping the stone works as well for dragons as it does for people, you hold your breath as she tosses a salty emerald into her mouth.

"Hmmm," Gilda rumbles to herself, "I could eat lots of those without needing water."

Rounding the corner, you say to the others, "What I didn't tell her was that the stone also keeps her from being hungry, so even though she's eating out of habit now, she's starting on a diet!"

Jancy and Coren laugh with you as you start to explore the new passageway.

A few minutes later, you stop abruptly and say, "Hush! Listen!" And in the distance you hear a quiet tap-tap-tap. "It's my father!" you exclaim. "I've heard the sound of his hammer on gold all my life!"

Moving swiftly but cautiously, you creep down the passage until you reach an iron door, slightly ajar, leading to a chamber from which the sound comes.

"Oh, what if it isn't him?" you fret. Coren grabs your hand and squeezes it encouragingly.

Together, the three of you push open the door and peer in. A tall, thin man stands at a bench, absorbed in his work and surrounded by gold and jewels.

"Father!" you shout.

The man turns with a look of disbelief on his face and takes a step toward you.

"Chandelle!!" And as you run into his arms you see that he's fastened to the stone wall by a chain.

"Oh, Father! How can we free you?"

"You've brought the answer with you, my dear."

"I have?" you say puzzled. "Is it Coren?" Quickly, you introduce the knight and the halfling to your father, wondering if the two men will like each other. *I*

certainly hope they do! you think to yourself.

"The ioun stones, Chandelle. I know what spells the old wizard packed into the spell stone."

"I've already used some of them," you say.

"Well, let's see which spells remain." Your father plucks the stones from around your head and lets them float up into a ring around his own. Then, clutching some dust from the floor in one hand, he murmurs some words. Instantly, one link in the heavy chain disintegrates into nothing, and he is free. "The Disintegrate Spell was still there," he says.

Quickly, you tell him how you, Coren, and Jancy got there and add, "Gilda may change her mind about protecting us. We'd better get out of here as quickly as possible."

As you rush out of the workshop, you hear a roar of great anger from the treasure room, then, ". . . and you've kept me locked up here . . ." It's Gilda's voice!

"Raedl's spell on Gilda must have worn off very quickly," Coren says.

"Two dragons fighting! What a sight that would be!" exclaims Jancy. "I'd like to see that!"

"Jancy!" you say, appalled at her recklessness, and you grab her by the collar as she starts to walk toward the dragon fight.

The noise in the tunnels is deafening as the two enraged dragons fight each other. Occasionally, the earth shakes, and soil and bits of stone fall from the ceiling as your father leads the way out of Raedl's lair. Now whenever you pass monsters which you would have feared a short while before, they seem strangely quiet as they listen to the dragon battle. It's almost as if

they realize that their own fate hangs in the balance.

You reach for Coren's hand, no longer embarrassed about letting him know that you want his support.

He smiles at you and pulls you close so that the two of you walk out of the dragon's lair side by side.

As you walk away from the danger and the fear, you know in your heart that, just as the good creatures in the caves have been released from the ruby dragon's evil charm, you have been released from the fear of displeasing others. You can be yourself, a self that a brave and handsome young knight has come to love, a self that you're happy to be.

THE END

Suddenly, you feel that the beautiful glade is TOO enchanted, that Torbeck is going to kiss you because his doing so is part of the enchantment. You don't want a kiss under those circumstances!

Looking for a reason to leave the knight's arms, you quickly reach down for your leather pouch.

"Oh, are the stones still here?" you say, trying to sound concerned as you pull the bag from your pocket.

You open the bag and the two lavender stones float out, joining the others in the ring around your head.

Instantly, the enchanted glade disappears.

"Oh!" you gasp, and Torbeck looks around, startled at the change.

"What happened?" wails Jancy, her hand still in midair as if she were petting something.

"The stones must have broken the spell," you say, and then you add sadly, "All that beauty must have been a spell."

Torbeck smiles and touches your cheek lightly with one finger. "Maybe that moment was caused by an enchantment, Chandelle, but I don't need to be induced by a magic spell to kiss you. But there will be a real time and a real place."

"Good. I'll hold you to that," you say quietly.

Jancy rejoins you, grumbling, "That wasn't very nice of someone—creating all those nice animals just as a magic spell. Why would someone do that?"

"I don't know, Jancy," you say. "It was probably an attempt to keep us from getting to the dragon's lair."

You all remount your horses, and it's quickly clear that the spell the witch put on Dawdle has ended.

Please turn to page 15.

Looking from the rough captain to the mermaids, you suddenly know that there's really no choice—you WANT to ride in a boat pulled by mermaids!

"Thank you, Captain Seacleaver, but we'll keep to the arrangements made for us by the sage Marengall."

He backs away, angry. As he turns, you hear him say, "Fools to trust those mermaids."

Hoping he's wrong, you say, "Let's go, Antha!"

Antha claps her hands, and the giggling mermaids spread a web of golden strands outward from the boat. Each of the fish-tailed ladies positions herself at the end of a strand, Antha in the lead.

At a signal from Antha, the mermaids start to swim, their powerful tails driving them through the water.

Soon you are out of sight of the mainland, but you occasionally see an island, perhaps the ones Captain Seacleaver mentioned.

You notice that Torbeck is firmly clutching the side of the boat and Jancy has curled up in the bottom. The only one that looks relaxed is Coren. He sees you looking at him and smiles. "The only way to travel!" he says, holding his face up to the wind.

What a figurehead he would make on a boat! you muse.

On that thought you turn around, wondering if the captain and his boat are somewhere in sight behind you. But no other boat is visible.

However, you soon notice that a number of dolphins are swimming nearby, keeping pace with the mermaids. They soar out of the water in graceful arcs, glinting in the sunshine. One dolphin, with a deep pink tinge to its back, swims up by Antha, and then back to the head of the dolphin group.

Gradually, you realize that the mermaids are making a beautiful, high-pitched noise that sounds a bit like hummingbirds chattering to each other. They seem to be carrying on a conversation with the dolphins in a strange, enchanting language.

Soon Antha swims back beside you.

"Why do the dolphins swim beside us?" you ask.

"They know about your quest and they've offered to help. The one at the head of the group says he knows of a shortcut to the dragon's underwater entrance. They can pull you faster than we can."

"Oh, how wonderful!" you say, hurrying to add, "But what about you?"

"The other mermaids and I can only take you to the Dragon's Eye. You'll have to find your own way in. Marengall doesn't know exactly where it is. But . . ."

"But what?" you ask.

"Well . . . I don't really know if you ought to go with those dolphins. They seem kind of funny to me. Dolphins are usually fine, playful fellows. These seem to be, well, awfully serious."

You think about the decision you must make, and then you smile at the mermaid and say,

"Thank you for your help, Antha.

*But since we're here to rescue my father,
we'd better take the quickest way and accept
the dolphins' offer." Turn to page 113.*

*"We asked the sage for his help,
so we'll stick with the plans he made.
But please thank the dolphins for us."*

Turn to page 131.

Jancy stares at you, puzzled by your words.

"I have some magic stones that were my father's," you explain. "But I'm never sure just what they'll do."

Quickly, you pull the pouch of magic stones from you pocket and pour them into your hand. As they rise and form a ring above your head, you remember the lavender stones. *They absorb spells!* Trying to calm your excited thinking, you close your eyes and concentrate on the lavender stones with their bright streaks of green.

"Stop that singing, somehow, please," you say to the stones.

Suddenly, you hear Jancy gasp, and you open your eyes to see golden rays of light leave the singing figures on the rocky island and head toward the lavender and green stones in the ring around your head.

"Look out! We're going to crash on the rocks!" Torbeck shouts, no longer enchanted. He and Coren quickly turn the wheel back to the left, moving the boat out into open water again. Coren bends down and helps the helmsman to his feet.

Curious, you walk back to Coren and ask, "What were you hearing that was so wonderful?"

A puzzled look on his face, he replies, "I don't really know, now, but at the time everything in me said I must go toward that wonderful, enchanting singing."

He looks crestfallen and adds, "Now I see that we would have driven the boat onto the rocks. I wouldn't have endangered you for all the world, Chandelle. You mean too much to me. Thank you for bringing me back to reality."

"Those magic stones of yours certainly did the trick," says Jancy, still amazed at what she's seen.

"What happened?" Torbeck asks, confused.

"Come on, I'll explain it all to you," Jancy offers. Just then the captain comes back on deck.

"Any trouble?" he asks, puzzled, but with a disappointed look on his face.

"No, none," you reply, though you're not sure why you don't tell him about the strange singing. *Where was he when the boat was going to crash into the island?* you wonder.

The boat sails on. Moving restlessly around the deck, you suddenly realize that a large wave is forming in front of the boat. You watch, awestruck, as something begins to emerge from the water.

"It's green," says Jancy. "Maybe it's a new island forming."

"No! Look!" exclaims Sir Torbeck. "It's a person! It has a face!"

"It's a giant!" you shout. "Hang on!"

For a moment you think the boat is going to be capsize by the wave formed by the giant's motion, but soon the boat settles.

Your relief is abruptly cut short, though, when you realize that the rocking motion has ended because the boat is being cradled in the huge giant's arms.

"It's a storm giant!" whispers Coren in awe. "I've heard about them. We don't stand a chance if he gets angry."

"Then let's not make him angry!" says Jancy.

Suddenly, you feel the boat being raised until it comes to rest just under the giant's eyes.

Convinced that you're going to die, you grab Coren's hand. He squeezes it tightly and smiles encouragingly at you.

But you've not yet met your doom. The storm giant, slightly nearsighted, is just trying to see clearly what he has caught.

"PEOPLE!" he booms. "GOOD! YOU CAN GET MY TOYS FOR ME!"

"Your toys?" says Torbeck, his voice shaky.

"I DROPPED THEM ON AN ISLAND, AND THE TIDE CARRIED THEM INTO A CAVE. COME! I'LL SHOW YOU!"

The deck is a mass of confusion as the giant swirls the boat through the air, dropping it onto an island.

"My boat!" screams the captain, turning deep red with rage. The rest of you pull yourselves out of the heap into which you've fallen. Fortunately, no one has been injured.

"OH!" says the giant, dismay in his deep voice. "SORRY. I'LL FIX YOUR BOAT—I'LL EVEN TAKE IT RIGHT WHERE YOU WANT TO GO—IF YOU'LL GET MY TOYS."

"He's kind of nice," says Jancy. "Let's do it."

"Let's just quick build a raft and get out of here! There's plenty of wood on this island—look around!" suggests Torbeck.

"But what about my boat?" yells the captain. "You can't just leave it here!"

You think a minute and then say:

"Let's try to help the giant. Then he'll help us."

If that's your choice, turn to page 39.

"Jancy and I can distract the giant while you men build a raft."

If that's your choice, turn to page 106.

Now that your doubts are surfacing, you realize that even your father's big hug of welcome didn't feel quite right. Nor does the fact that you found him so easily.

Quickly, before you change your mind again, you ask, "Father, tell me what spells are in the purple stone?"

"Stone?" He looks puzzled and then angry. "Chandelle, what game is this? I know nothing about spells in stones."

You feel yourself go cold. "He's not my father!" you shout.

Instantly, Torbeck draws his sword and Jancy her dagger and they turn them toward the man who called you his daughter.

As you watch, the man snarls in rage and his face begins to turn red.

"Get him, Torbeck!" you shout. But as the knight begins to swing his sword, your father—no! the dragon—begins to breathe fire, though his body is still that of a human.

You watch in horror as the fire threatens your friends. Then you concentrate on the purple spell stone until it begins to vibrate and give off a strange purple light.

You don't know what will happen, but anything is better than watching Torbeck and Jancy be overwhelmed by a dragon!

Please turn to page 109.

"I'll find it," exclaims Jancy. "I can see in the dark, remember? And I'm a good swimmer, too!" And with that, she dives into the water.

Only twenty minutes pass before the halfling's small face, dripping but smiling brightly, emerges from the water by your boat.

"I've found it!" she beams. "But I'll have to take you one at a time."

"Since it is my father we're looking for," you say, "I would like to go first."

Coren starts to protest, but seeing your determined expression, thinks better of it.

You wrap your cloak into a tight bundle and hug it under your arm. Then, taking Jancy's hand, you jump into the water and swim along a complicated route that you're certain you would never have discovered by yourself.

Finally, she shouts, "Take a deep breath!" And, giving you no time to be frightened, dives deep into the water between two tall white rocks that appear to stand as sentries. As you dive, you get a glimpse of a burgundy-colored dolphin, swimming nearby, a strange look of satisfaction on its face.

You are certain your lungs are going to burst when you suddenly pop out of the water, and find yourself in a calm pool beneath the rock roof of a cavern. In the soft light that filters in, you see a small sandy beach ahead of you and a dark opening, probably a tunnel, in the rock at the far end of the beach.

As Jancy leaves to guide someone else down, you discover a soft warmth to the air in the cavern and your hair and clothing quickly start to dry.

After a short time, the water starts to ripple and

Jancy, followed closely by Coren, pops out.

"It won't be quite so easy bringing Sir Torbeck," Jancy says. "He really doesn't appreciate the water!" And off she goes on another trip.

"He also doesn't want to leave his armor behind," adds Coren.

"Oh, your beautiful new armor!" you exclaim.

"Don't worry about the armor, Chandelle. After we take care of Raedl and find your father, I'll get it back."

He walks toward you on the sand, wringing water from his clothing and shaking his hair.

"Chandelle . . ." He hesitates. "I've been wanting to tell you I'm sorry I left you yesterday to go find help by yourself. I knew the moment you disappeared that I was wrong. I was so attracted to you . . . but I was disappointed when you said we should get more help. I guess I let it hurt my pride. I behaved childishly, I know, and I'm very sorry."

"Oh, Coren. Please don't be sorry." You try to smile through the tears that threaten to fill your eyes. *He cares!* your heart sings inside you. "But I'm very, very happy we met again."

You reach out a tentative hand and brush a damp lock of hair off the knight's forehead.

"I wanted so badly to show you that I was all the things a knight should be, and I was angry when it seemed as if you didn't want to give me the chance." He shakes his head. "Then I realized that, of course, you had to do everything possible to find your father. And I felt a fool."

"I would never consider you a fool, Coren," you say.

SPLASH! The sound of Torbeck popping out of

the water dissolves the tenderness of your shared moment.

"Whew!" Torbeck says. "If there's any more water ahead, count me out!" Seeing you and Coren standing so close together, he says, "Well, let's get going. We've got a cave to explore and a father to find."

Jancy's pert voice chides, "I bet you trample on flowers, too, Torbeck."

"Huh?" the knight replies, looking puzzled.

Laughing slightly, you back away from Coren, and say, "Yes; let's be going. There's an opening over here in the wall."

Walking quietly, you go only a little way down the torchlit passageway before it widens.

"There must be a chamber ahead," says Coren.

"Oh, dear. There's trouble coming," you hear a voice laden with weariness say. "Go away, Trouble. I don't need you."

Looking at each other in surprise, you tiptoe on.

"You're coming closer, Trouble. I told you to go away. But I don't suppose you will." The voice sounds sad, resigned.

You reach the illuminated chamber and start to go in, but Coren pulls you back and steps ahead of you, sword drawn.

"Well, one of you is daring enough to enter. You might as well put that sword away. We're not going to have a fight. Come on in, the rest of you."

Torbeck, Jancy, and you step out of the passageway, not knowing what to expect.

Your first impression is of dark green—vibrant dark green. The walls of the chamber are covered with lustrous jade that sends reflections of lit torches branch



ing off in all directions.

Then you realize that in the middle of the room is a huge green snake with a humanlike head. Along its back is a row of silver triangles that seem to radiate the green of the walls. The whole effect is beautiful.

"Yes, it is beautiful," the creature says dolefully. "And no, you can't have it," it adds, making Torbeck start. *The creature must be able to read minds, you think.*

"Stop calling me a 'creature,'" it says. "I am the guardian naga, and my responsibility is to protect Raedl's treasure. Now, you might as well understand that I'm not about to let you get by. That just isn't done by guardian nagas. But between you and me, I hope you make it to the pool. Then this whole business would be over, and we could all go home."

"What pool?" you ask.

Its head swaying back and forth, the naga replies,

"The magic pool. Its water is the source of our subservience to the dragon.

"Here are unicorns, centaurs, flying lions—all of us basically nice people, creatures, if you insist—doing evil things because the dragon makes us drink from her magic pool."

The creature adds mournfully, "And here I am, a highly respectable guardian naga, protecting that pool. Will it never end?"

The pool! Maybe we can get to it and somehow stop its evil magic! you think. Glancing at Jancy, you take note of her excitement and realize that she is beginning to see a way to get back at the dragon who destroyed her home.

But then the naga stops swaying and sits upright. "However, don't get the idea that I'm going to let you approach the pool. As long as I AM a guardian naga, I will guard! If you'll take my advice, you'll go down that passageway over on your right."

Shaking yourself free of your surprise at seeing the talking snake, you quickly ask, "Why?"

"Well, I don't really want to kill you. I just might have to if you try to do anything to the pool. And I am quite certain that you would find that passageway very interesting. But then, of course, I might be lying."

*If you think you should fight the naga
in order to destroy the evil of the pool,
turn to page 137.*

*But if you want to take the naga's advice
and go down the "interesting" passageway,
turn to page 17.*

"I envy you your ability to yield to whim and the lure of adventure, Torbeck," you say. "But I'm a jeweler, and I've got to function by plans. Maybe it's not so fun, but it's satisfying—planning and organizing and then doing the actual work to turn raw gold and rough stones into a thing of beauty.

"So I'll stick with the plan, Torbeck, and let Dawdle lead us where the witch has directed her."

As you ride on you hear him grumbling about "no spirit in the girl" and "you've got to live a little." Jancy soon pulls Gooseberry up closer to Torbeck and tells him some of her own adventures. You smile to yourself as you hear her work very hard to impress him with her free spirit.

When the path divides again, Dawdle hesitates for the first time.

"Do you suppose the witch's spell is wearing off?" you ask, concerned. But then the horse enters the right-hand path and walks on.

"Maybe something just didn't feel quite right to her," suggests Jancy. "Horses are very sensitive to atmosphere—at least Gooseberry is."

Agreeing that she might be right, your attention, too, is suddenly caught by the atmosphere. Something is different on this path. The woods you had been going through was lovely, but quite an ordinary woods. But now it is becoming beautiful, almost too beautiful.

"Torbeck," you say. "Do you see? The sky is suddenly bluer. And listen to the birds! Have you ever heard them sing so sweetly?"

Torbeck pulls up beside you and as the two of you dismount, you see by his face that he too is feeling the enchantment of the wonderful glade you've entered. A

fawn prances across the grass ahead of you and Torbeck's expression softens even more.

"Willikers!" gasps Jancy. "Have you ever seen the like? Look! Flowers everywhere. And rabbits! And ermine!" She slides off Gooseberry and runs around the wonderful glade inspecting all she sees, both plant and animal alike.

"Somehow this place doesn't feel real," you say and you shudder slightly. "Maybe that's why Dawdle hesitated—she sensed something different."

Torbeck's arm moves around you as he says, "It's real enough for me, Chandelle—just as real, and wonderful, as you are."

And suddenly you know that he's going to kiss you, not a quick peck on the forehead or even a brush of the lips. Here in this beautiful spot, in this enchanted glade, he's going to kiss you.

You feel his breath on your face, and your arm starts to move up to his shoulder, almost of its own volition.

Will you let him kiss you? If so, turn to page 94.

*If you prefer to wait for a time
when you're thinking more clearly,
turn to page 78.*

The howls and roars of the creatures as they run through the woods seem to echo in your head and turn your thoughts into a jumble: *She was helping me; I ought to help her . . . But my father needs help, too; the dragon may be hurting him . . . She's a magic-user; she can protect herself . . . Torbeck says there are too many monsters!* And finally your mind settles on one thought: *Torbeck says, Torbeck says, Torbeck says, 'Don't go back.'*

"Let's not go back," you say quietly, and sadly.

"Wise girl." Torbeck smiles his approval and urges his charger on down the path.

If that was wisdom, why don't I feel wise? you wonder to yourself as you realize that you no longer hear the howling of the determined creatures.

You ride on toward the rising sun until you reach a branch in the path.

"Which way shall we go?" asks Torbeck.

"Whatever you think," you reply, your thoughts elsewhere. You turn north, following Torbeck's lead.

By the time Torbeck admits that he chose the wrong trail, you are truly lost in the vast forest. You find no sign of a dragon . . . or of anyone else.

Several days later, you finally return to the small town where you started your quest. When you ask the innkeeper to tell you how to reach the sage he had told you about, he looks fearfully over his shoulder at an evil-looking centaur who is watching him closely and says, "Things have changed around here now. I can't tell you anything."

Sadly you realize you have reached . . .

THE END

I don't know just how the magic spell stone works, you think. I might hurt them if I use it.

"We'd better plug their ears," you say aloud to the halfling. "Where's some wax?"

You both look around and Jancy spots a candle in a small lantern mounted on the deckhouse wall. She runs to it and breaks the lantern to get the candle.

You shake your head in dismay as you realize that the men, both now guiding the wheel, didn't even notice the sound of breaking glass. They're so enthralled by the music that nothing else matters!

The wax is already soft from the very warm air surrounding the island, so you quickly shape it with your fingers.

At first the men don't even notice when you push small pieces of it into their ears. But suddenly, the distant look is gone from their faces. They look startled at finding themselves at the wheel of the boat.

"Whew! It's hot!" exclaims Torbeck.

But the relief you feel doesn't last. As the boat moves closer to the rocky island, the heat becomes more fierce.

"Oh no!" you cry, pointing at the men, who once again are staring intently at the island and the female creatures who sing so enchantingly. The wax has melted out of Coren's and Torbeck's ears!

"I'll have to try magic!" you exclaim.

Please turn to page 81.

You look up into Torbeck's deep brown eyes and feel your heart swell.

Suddenly, you think, *So what if this is an enchanted place? I want to live this enchanted moment.* And you let your hand slide up around Torbeck's neck as you raise your face to his.

Gently as a butterfly's wing, his lips brush yours and he murmurs, "My enchanting one!" Then his lips press against yours with a sure firmness, and for a moment, you're aware of nothing but your heart beating with his.

Then, behind you a horse nickers and the moment is gone.

Reluctantly breaking away from Torbeck, you're startled to see Jancy, her arms cradling a rabbit, walking toward you. You start to blush, but then she says, "Enjoy the enchantment, Chandelle," and you just smile and nod agreement.

Torbeck laughs and throws an arm around Jancy, giving her a hug.

"You're a woman of wisdom, Jancy," he says. Then he turns back to you and says, "This is indeed a place of enchantment, made even more enchanting by the presence of you two. But I think we'd better get out of here or maybe we won't be able to later. I don't know about you, but I don't relish the idea of being spell-bound."

Torbeck helps you onto Dawdle's back, holding you a little more closely and a little longer than necessary.

As you ride, you expect Dawdle to settle down, especially as you leave the enchanted glade and enter ordinary forest again. But she seems increasingly rest-



less. When you reach a division in the path, and she hesitates a long time before taking the left-hand trail, you again wonder if the witch's spell is wearing off.

When Dawdle's step slows, as if she's reluctant to follow this path, Torbeck suggests, "Maybe this isn't the right path. I don't think I really trust the witch's spell to keep us going in the right direction."

If you agree with Torbeck, pull the lavender stones from your pocket and let them absorb the witch's spell. Then choose your own path, and turn to page 15.

If you think Dawdle is still under the witch's spell and has become restless for some other reason, turn to page 146.

You stare at the stranger's back for a moment, but then shake your head slightly, thinking, *There's too much wrong here. Where did he come from? Who is he? Why is he in the dragon's lair? And where is the dragon?*

"I can't come," you call, and you feel Coren's hand squeeze yours in approval.

"What?" shrieks the man, turning back toward you. He slips on a gem on the floor and catches himself, then says with anger, "This is absurd! Chandelle, your father is waiting!"

And then you ask your questions aloud: "Who are you? How do you know where my father is? Where is the dragon?" Beside you, Coren and Torbeck draw their swords.

His face, no longer handsome, turns red with rage. And the red spreads as, disbelieving, you watch the image of the suave gentleman dissolve into a ruby-colored dragon that soon fills the chamber.

Coren and Torbeck advance on the dragon, swinging their swords. But their powerful blades are useless against the great flood of flame that spews from the mouth of the raging dragon.

Horrified, you see that Coren's clothing has caught fire. *Water! I've got to get water!* you think, and you turn and run back to the marble fountain.

Faster than you've ever moved before, you grab one of the pots, scoop water from the fountain, and dash back to the battle. You feel the searing pain in your own body as you see the man you love lunge with his great sword toward the dragon while tendrils of flame creep along his back.

You fling the water toward the knight's back as hard

as you can, hoping to kill the flame. But just as you do so, Coren slips on a gem and stumbles to catch himself, rolling over and dousing the flames. The sheet of water misses him completely and, instead, spreads over the raging dragon. Raedl rears back with an angry roar, her great fore-claws poised for destruction.

You wait for the great red mass to come down and destroy you and your love, but nothing happens. Raedl remains forever a giant statue made of deep red marble with flashes of pink and crimson embedded in it.

"The water!" you say in amazement. "The fountain said that Raedl would find death in the water that she used against others."

"We did it!" shouts Jancy, leaping up and down in a dance around Torbeck. "Now I can go home!"

"Now I can search for my father without fear!" you say.

Coren hugs you close in a moment of quiet joy and then says, "And I can have a talk with him about hiring me as your guard on your journeys through the countryside. We have a lot to learn about each other, Chandelle."

"Yes," you agree. "But now we have time to learn."

THE END

Experience is probably more useful than enthusiasm in a fight, you think to yourself.

Turning to Coren, you say, "We'd better go into town and see what we can learn about the creatures around here. Maybe there's some explanation for why they are attacking people."

"Well . . . if you think so," says Coren. A look of disappointment flashes across his face. "But I'm sure I could handle anything we might run into."

"I'm sure you could, Coren," you say, not wanting to hurt his feelings. "But I can't take a chance on two of us not being enough to rescue my father."

"Then I'll be on my way, Chandelle," says the knight. "I'm sure you'll find help in town—probably more experienced help. You won't need me."

You try to persuade him to stay with you, but he's firm about leaving. However, he offers, "I'll see you safely to the edge of the town."

Unharnessing Dawdle from the wagon shafts, you mount her bareback and head toward town. At the edge of the forest, you say good-bye to Coren and ride on, wondering a bit sadly what you might have missed by parting from him now.

In town, you quickly find that people are reluctant to talk to a stranger.

"I can't talk now," says one fearful woman, clutching her shawl about her head and walking quickly away.

"We just don't take notice of anything," says a man repairing a fence. "It's safer that way."

Finally, one small boy looks carefully around and exclaims in a whisper, "Aw-w-w, I'm not afraid of any dragon!" Then a look of fear at his own daring crosses

his face, and he turns and dashes down the road.

Dragon! Standing there in the road, stunned, you wonder what you have led yourself into, and you wish Sir Coren were with you.

You look for an inn and find one, the Wooden Whistle, near the edge of town. There's little sign of activity, and even when you enter the dimly lit, low-ceilinged public room, you find yourself almost alone. A lone man seated at a table by the window looks up as you enter. You feel his gaze linger on you before it returns to his glass of ale. A small figure sits at a little table in the shadows at the back.

The innkeeper rushes toward you, wiping his hands on his leather apron. Bowing slightly, he asks, "How may I be of service, milady?"

"I want to hire someone—a fighter—to help me find my father."

"Your father, milady?"

"Yes. We were set upon not far from here by a centaur and some winged lions. They . . . they kidnapped him!" Your composure suddenly breaks.

The innkeeper tactfully ignores the tears that spring to your eyes and murmurs, as if to himself, "She's done some strange things before, but kidnapping a stranger . . ."

"She?"

"Oh, I was speaking of Raedl, the red dragon." He looks quickly around, leans toward you, and speaks in a whisper. "Somehow the dragon has enchanted normally friendly creatures, such as those winged lions, and makes them do evil things. People hereabouts are frightened even to speak of her."

"Well, this Raedl has now taken my father as well as

the precious jewels he had with him," you say.

"Ah, jewels, milady," says the innkeeper. "Now I understand. Raedl is very fond of jewels. Although I am surprised that the creatures took your father, too. Usually they just break in and steal what gems and gold they can find to take to her lair."

"My father is a jeweler," you say thoughtfully.

"Well, that sheds a different light on it," he says, holding out his hands as if everything were now made clear. "She probably wants to have her favorite gems remounted. Now that I think of it, I have heard of at least two local goldsmiths who have disappeared," he adds.

"And what happened to them?" you ask the innkeeper, fear leaping in your heart.

"Oh, they were never heard of ag—!" he stops abruptly as a large figure looms up in front of him.

"You were going to say something that wouldn't alarm the lady?" the newcomer demands sharply.

"Oh, yes, of course, sir!" the innkeeper jabbars. Then he turns to you and says, "Oh, milady, I certainly had no intention of adding to your fears."

"No. That's all right," you say, trying to suppress the additional alarm you feel. Realizing that the newcomer who halted the innkeeper's thoughtless chatter is the man who was seated at the window, you say to him, "Sir, I think you heard about my plight. Perhaps you can suggest where I might find help."

The man looks you squarely in the face and smiles. Until that moment, you'd had no real impression of him except as a large, dark man, probably a fighter, about twenty-five years old. But his smile transforms him. You see that he is handsome in a rugged,

slightly care-worn way. You know that his dark eyes are fully taking you in and liking what they see—but you guess, too, that only on rare occasions have they *not* liked what they've seen in a woman. You straighten your cloak and your hand involuntarily creeps to your hair to straighten it under the golden circlet.

"Allow me to introduce myself, milady—Sir Torbeck at your service." He bows stiffly, but his eyes fix yours intently, commanding you to heed him.

"Among my other accomplishments, I battled the evil gorgimera of the Thodall Forest, guided the first successful expedition through the Great Shimmering Mountains, and returned the fabled Cloak of Clamoring to its owner—he was very appreciative."

You stand mesmerized by the look in his eyes and the speech he just made, though understanding neither of them.

Shaking your head to clear it, you reply, "And I am Chandelle, daughter of Maris the jeweler. My father has been kidnapped by some creatures, possibly under the control of a red dragon. Sir, I need to hire someone to help me find and rescue him." On that last word, you realize once again the horror of the situation. Your voice breaks and tears rush to your eyes.

Sir Torbeck steps quickly to your side and puts a strong arm protectively around your shoulder. You feel an urge to relax against it.

"Now, now, milady, don't fret," he says, smiling down at you. "I'll take care of everything. I'll get your father back." Your tears dry quickly as you realize that you're more aware of his arm than his words.

Trembling slightly, you bend over to brush something from the hem of your cloak. When you straighten

up, you hope that it seems by chance that you are no longer under his arm.

You smile at him and say, "I will be grateful to have your help, Sir Torbeck." Then you remember that he is a fighter, a man who helps people for a living.

You hesitate, not knowing how to ask. "Uh, how—how much—?"

Sir Torbeck, seeing your confusion and reluctance to bring up the subject of payment, quickly interrupts. "It would be my privilege to aid such a charming young lady as yourself. Let us just say that we will share equally any of the dragon's hoard we come across."

Relieved at the problem being so easily solved, you quickly agree. Then, looking around for the innkeeper, you realize that the room has become quite dark.

"Oh, it's raining! The trail will be washed away. How are we going to find Raedl's lair?" Turning to Sir Torbeck, you ask, "Do you know the way?"

"No, I don't. But—"

"I know who can perhaps help, milady," interrupts the innkeeper. "There is a sage here in town who is very wise. I know he has made a great study of the red dragon. Maybe he has discovered where her lair is."

"Oh, he just keeps records and looks in books," a scornful voice says from the other side of the room.

Turning, you see the small figure which was seated at the back of the inn when you entered. As the figure nears you in the dim light, you see a female halfling dressed in orange and brown, who adds, "I know someone who would be much more useful."

"Oh?" you say, curiously, charmed by the diminutive person about half your size, who seems to dance

toward you on her feet as she crosses the room.

"Yes," she says in a small sparkling voice. "There's a witch—a lawful good witch—named Grantia who lives in the woods at the edge of town. Her crystal ball will tell you what you want to know.

"And I'll be happy to take you there," the halfling adds enthusiastically. "But . . ." She hesitates. "There is just one thing."

"What's that?" Torbeck asks.

The halfling glances at him and then seems caught by his gaze the way you were. A gentle, transforming smile flickers across the fighter's face, and the halfling unconsciously sighs in reaction.

You clear your throat and the halfling reluctantly turns back to you. "I'll have to go with you. Grantia doesn't trust strangers. I can be lots of help, and—" She looks the fighter over with a roguish smile. "—the company should be very interesting."

"How could you help?" you ask. "You're so—"

"Small?" The little figure completes the sentence. "I know. But I'm a trained thief and I can do lots of things neither of you can do—I can see in the dark, I can sneak through places very quietly, and I can talk to some of the creatures we meet. I bet you can't speak orcish!" she says proudly.

"No," you admit, and the halfling adds, "So you'd be glad to have my help, wouldn't you?"

Torbeck smiles down at her. "Enchanted, little lady. I can't think of a thing I need more. But tell me why you're so eager to go with us."

For a moment, the halfling's jovial face loses its animation. Slowly she says, "The dragon's hordes rampaged through my village some time back and

destroyed everything." Her voice drops to a fierce whisper. "I said I'd get her and I will!"

Even she seems shocked at the intensity in her voice and consciously changes the expression on her face to one of pixyish humor. Then she curtsies in exaggerated fashion to each of you and says, "Jancy the small-but-enthusiastic thief, at your service."



"All right, Jancy," you say, charmed by the girl. "I'll be glad of your company. And you can share in whatever wealth we find—after we find my father."

"Good! Are we going to consult the witch?"

Torbeck moves closer to you and whispers, "It might be a trick, Chandelle. Centaurs and winged lions may not be the only creatures that dragon can control with her powers. Perhaps we should go to the sage."

*If you want to visit the witch and
see if her crystal ball can locate your father,
turn to page 132.*

*But if you think it's safer to go to the sage,
turn to page 47.*

"That giant's awfully big, but I don't think we can trust him to take us where we want to go. We'd better try to get away from here under our own power," you say quietly, so the giant won't hear.

"But what about my boat?" wails the captain.

"Maybe we can do something about it later," says Torbeck. "But right now we've got to get out of here."

The captain stamps off in a huff and goes below just as the green storm giant leans toward the boat again and says, "WELL?"

"We're still thinking about it, Mr. Giant," you say bravely.

"MY NAME IS BORGAN," he booms. Then he looks at you more closely. "OH, PRETTY!" He reaches out a huge finger and touches the ring of ioun stones around your head.

As the men sneak off the boat and set to work gathering logs for a raft, you let the giant inspect the stones, each a tiny speck on his finger. Soon he shyly shows you some of his own precious objects—sea urchins, coral, starfish, and other sea creatures.

You and Jancy are just beginning to run out of things to keep Borgan busy when he says, "OH, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN MY PETS!" He bellows a call that echoes across the water, and soon four sea lions come playfully swimming around him. Showing off his pets' tricks keeps the giant busy until Coren moves in behind you and whispers, "We're ready, Chandelle."

You ask the giant to have one more sea lion do a trick, and the moment he's occupied with that, you and Jancy slip off the boat and run to the small raft the men have prepared. The two of you hop on as Torbeck and Coren push it off the island.

Behind you, you hear the giant shout, "WHERE ARE YOU? YOU MISSED A GOOD TRICK!"

Then he catches sight of you. "YOU WON'T GET MY TOYS? ARGHHHH!!!!!" And a mighty wind begins to blow as the giant storms in rage.

You lie on the raft, hanging on for dear life, as the fierce wind blows you hither and thither. Once you think you hear a voice behind you moan, "OHHHHH, MY TOYS!"

Gradually, the storm giant's storm dwindles to a few rough waves and you're able to look up. You see nothing—no rocks, no islands—nothing. You are out in the middle of a lonely sea.

"And all he wanted was a few toys," murmurs Jancy to herself.

You lie there stunned, wondering what to do and if you'll survive, wishing you knew how far away you are from land.

"You look as if you could do with some help," a light bubbly voice says.

Anth!

The mermaid glides smoothly up onto the edge of the raft. "I can't offer to exchange this raft for a small boat now, but maybe I can do something else."

She leans down into the water and hums a gentle melody that seems to radiate outward into the water. In just a few minutes, other mermaids as well as some dolphins are diving and leaping around the raft. You catch sight of one dolphin with skin like old, well-worn, burgundy-colored velvet, who seems to refuse to venture close.

"I've got to talk with the dolphins. Excuse me, please," says Antha.

After a few minutes of high-pitched chattering, which you don't understand, Antha returns to your side and says, "The mermaids agree to pull your raft with these," and she places some beautiful golden strands on the edge of the raft. "We can take you to the area around the Dragon's Eye rocks—we don't know exactly where the entrance is. But—" and she frowns in doubt "—that dark red dolphin claims to know exactly where the entrance to the lair is. So you might want to let the dolphins take you instead."

You look from the frolicking mermaids to the dolphins and back, and then say:

*"Thank you for coming back, Antha,
but I think we'd better go with the dolphins."
If this is your choice, turn to page 113.*

*"Since you mermaids are friends of the sage,
we should have stayed with you in the first place.
We'd appreciate your pulling us." Turn to page 131.*

Shutting out the terrifying sounds around you, your mind captures one word: "transmute." And you feel the essence of the word and the power of the stone become as one.

Stone of Fire, Stone of Light,

TRANSMUTE *the cave and aid our flight!*

Opening your eyes, all you see at first is the enraged face of the ruby dragon as she breathes fire and reaches for your friends with her mighty claws. Torbeck's sword looks puny as he tries to lunge at the dragon's body. Jancy is backed into a corner but gamely tries to stab at the dragon's slashing tail with her little knife.

Then something cold, wet, and heavy hits your face. You clear one eye of a gob of mud and look up. Your spell has transmuted the rock of the cave into mud. The last thing you see before the ceiling slides down on top of you is the look of triumph on Torbeck's face as the dragon slips on the mud and slides right onto the point of his waiting sword.

THE END

"If we don't leave now and follow the tracks, we may never find my father," you say. "I don't think I could stand that!" Tears fill your eyes again.

"Try not to worry, Chandelle," Coren says, hesitantly putting a hand on your shoulder. You see deep concern in his eyes. "I'll do everything I can to help you, by . . . by my honor as a knight," he finishes in a flourish that makes him blush again.

Then he looks at his hand on your shoulder and drops it quickly, adding, "We'd better be on our way."

Coren helps you unharness your horse, Dawdle. You'll have to leave the wagon and hope to return to it later. Looking up at the darkening sky, you grab the leather bag of magic stones and thrust them into your pocket. Then, before Sir Coren can help you, you step up on the hub of the wagon wheel and swing your leg over Dawdle, skirts swirling around you.

"All right, Sir Coren, let's go," you say firmly. You turn your face forward, determined not to look back at your father's wagon, which you must abandon.

The young knight on the cinnamon horse leads as you follow the distinct tracks of the centaur through the woods. The sky darkens as you enter a dense forest. After an hour, you see other tracks joining those of the centaur, tracks you don't recognize. They come from all directions and make a muddy path through the woods.

You're staring at the ground when you hear a faint sound.

"Sir Coren! Listen!" you say, stopping your horse.

The knight turns in his saddle and says, "Won't you please call me Coren, Chandelle? I'm very proud of the 'Sir,' but Coren sounds much friendlier."

"Yes, I will, Coren. But listen, please!"

You both stop your horses and listen. Through the woods comes a faint melody, so soft that it might be the breeze itself.

"Oh, Coren!" you say, your eyes widening with pleasure. "It's a satyr's pipes. I haven't heard them since I was a child."

"If it is a satyr, maybe we're nearing the centaur. Satyrs and centaurs often live near each other." Coren reaches behind him and takes up his shield. "We'd better be ready for anything!"

"But satyrs are friendly!" you exclaim.

"You thought centaurs were friendly, too," Coren reminds you. "We'd better walk, Chandelle."

"Why?" you ask, confused by his suggestion.

"Well, frankly, I fight better on the ground," he says, as you struggle to stifle a giggle. "If you hear the pipes again," he continues, "you'd better cover your ears. A satyr's melody may be magical."

You swing your leg over and prepare to slide off Dawdle, when Coren shouts, "Wait!"

Frozen in that position, you watch Coren quickly jump from his horse and run back to you.

"Now slide off. I'll catch you," he says. "I don't want you to hurt yourself."

"Oh, Coren, I've been jumping off horses for years, all by myself." Inside, you are overcome by a mixture of feelings—the desire to know what it's like to have a brave, gentle knight hold you, anger at the idea that he thinks you need help, plus a little fear that you might not carry it off gracefully. But then you see his expectant face turned toward yours and know that you can't reject his offer.

Sliding off the horse, you feel Coren's strong hands catch you before your feet touch the ground. It's a new sensation—a man holding you close. *I could get used to this*, you think, enjoying the feeling. Coren gently puts you down. You keep your eyes lowered, embarrassed at being so close, and whisper, "Thank you." Then you free yourself from his arms, hurriedly cock your head, and ask, "Do you hear the satyr anymore?"

Coren raises his head, a fleeting emotion, disappointment perhaps, crossing his face. "No . . ." he says, listening. Suddenly, something zips past your head and thuds against a tree behind you. "What?" Coren exclaims. He looks down and sees a heavy stone rolling on the ground at the base of the tree.

You quickly look in the direction from which the stone must have been launched and catch sight of several short humanlike creatures with horned heads and hooved hind legs—they are satyrs! They glare at you angrily, swinging slings in their hands, ready to hurl more large stones at you.

"Get behind a tree!" shouts Coren.

"But I can help fight them!" you argue, knowing you have a dagger and knowing, too, that you're capable of defending yourself.

"Please, Chandelle, I'm a knight. Let me protect you!" he demands in an offended tone.

*Will you let Coren fight the satyrs alone
and prove himself in his first battle as a knight?*

If so, turn to page 145.

*Or, if you're reluctant to pretend you need
protection, help fight the satyrs and turn to page 122.*

"Well, if you're sure," the mermaid says, shaking her head doubtfully.

While the other mermaids frolic around the boat, Antha swims off and returns with the leader dolphin, the one with deep pink skin, skin the color of burgundy.

"Can you tell me where the underwater entrance to the dragon's lair is?" you ask eagerly after Antha introduces you.

The dolphin stands on his tail and looks serious. "Certainly. Just let us pull your boat, and the mermaids can get on about their business."

He takes the golden strands from Antha and distributes them among the other dolphins. Soon your boat and its load of four humans is being pulled rapidly through the water.

This time your boat seems to leap and glide across the water, following the motion of the leaping dolphins. There's a look of exhilaration on the faces of the



others, and you feel it, too, but then memory of the reason for your quest overwhelms you.

"Do you think we'll see my father soon?" you ask Coren, sitting next to you.

"I certainly hope so, Chandelle," he says earnestly, and he squeezes your hand. "You know I'll do everything I can to help you."

"Yes." And somehow you do feel better knowing the knight is here beside you.

"Rocks ho!" calls Jancy, and she points at a large mound of rock that juts out of the water ahead of the lead dolphin.

Dolphin? That's not a dolphin pulling you! It's a much larger creature, with scales and a long tail! And as you watch in horror, the last sign of the burgundy-colored dolphin dissolves into a huge winged ruby-colored dragon!

"Raedl!" you exclaim.

She reaches back with her long tail and scoops your boat, whooshing through the water like a giant catapult.

Over the screams of Torbeck, Coren, and Jancy, you hear Raedl say, "You wanted to find my lair? Welcome." And you smash onto the rocks.

THE END

Your first rush of thought and feeling is to believe that somehow the beautiful bound woman is a trap set by the dragon. But then you realize that you *want* to believe that so you won't have to release her into Torbeck's arms. Shame and anger at yourself wash over you.

You murmur, "Sorry, Jancy," and hurry to the knight's side to help him release the fainting woman.

Fainting? You can't believe your eyes. As the last chain parts, riven by Torbeck's sword, the woman looks at Torbeck with a beam of gratitude and glee on her face. Then she begins to grow, and grow, and grow—until the elegant blue-gowned woman has changed into a huge bluish-silver giant that fills the room.

"A cloud giant!" gasps Torbeck, raising his sword, which looks puny next to the huge creature.

As you watch the creature grow, you feel a peculiar mixture of fear at its increasing size and relief that it is no longer an enchanting woman. Then the fear outweighs the relief as the giant towers over you and blocks your escape.

The giant brushes aside Torbeck's sword and booms, "You are good people. Thank you for releasing me. Now I will get that dragon for trapping me in that silly little body!"

The giant, moving with strides that shake the floor, heads toward a door on the far side of the torture chamber.

Quickly you call, "Sir? . . . Mr. Giant, sir. Have you see my father? A jeweler kidnapped by Raedl?"

The big blue misty figure stops and turns toward you. "In a workshop down the way. Follow me. I will

show you. Then I will go kill that ruby-red beast! Should have done it long ago!"

As Jancy hurries after the giant, Sir Torbeck comes to your side. He puts his large arms around you and pulls you to him.

"The end is in sight, Chandelle," and he kisses you gently.

"The end?"

"Of our search for your father. But I think you and I are at the beginning of something else, don't you?"

You nod, smiling, tears of happiness springing to your eyes. As you put your hand behind his neck to pull his mouth to yours, you make a promise to yourself: you have to take him as he is—attracted to everything that is attracted to him, just as you were, and acting upon whim all too often. Only if you let jealousy come between you will it ever really be . . .

THE END

How silly, you think, not to be able to say what I think. I like, maybe love, Coren! Who says it's wrong to let him know? If he doesn't feel the same way, well, that's just too bad. But at least I'll have been truthful!

You turn to Coren and ask, "Would you please help me take fresh water to the naga, Coren? We promised we'd help it if we found the secret of the pool."

"I'll help!" calls Jancy from across the room.

"No!" you rush to say. "Thank you, anyway. Why don't you and Torbeck . . . uh, look around for where we should go next."

Jancy looks at Coren and then at you and winks. "All right, Chandelle."

By the fountain are some beautiful jewel-encrusted marble pots. You and Coren fill one and carry it back to the naga, which is curled up with its head resting dejectedly on its back.

"I really should have fought you," it says mournfully. "It was my duty."

"Only because the dragon made you do it," you say. "You didn't really want to fight us, did you? And now you won't have to. I removed the magic from the fountain." You place the pot beside it and say, "Here. This is fresh water, without the dragon's spell."

As the naga begins to drink, you turn to Coren and take a deep breath.

"Coren, I don't know what you were going to say to me a while ago, but I have something to say myself."

"What is it, Chandelle?" he says, worry creasing his brow.

On an impulse, you reach out and take one of his hands in both of yours. It feels strong and firm in your grasp.

"I like you, Coren," you say. "I mean . . . you've come to be really special to me."

Coren starts to speak, but you quickly put a finger to his lips. "Wait, Coren. Let me finish. I don't know whether you really like . . . love, me or not." His lips kiss your finger and you stumble over your words. "And . . . and maybe it doesn't even matter, and you don't have to say anything if you don't want to. But no matter what happens from here on in, I want you to know that I'm very, very happy we met and that I think you're a lovable, wonderful person."

Having said what you needed to say, and suddenly embarrassed, you quickly turn away, freeing Coren's hand from your own.

But he won't let you go. His hands grasp yours as he says, "Wait! You can't say all that and not let me say anything!"

"I didn't want you to feel you *had* to say something," you reply.

"I know," he says quietly, and suddenly he has no trouble looking you in the eye.

"Girls scare me, Chandelle. And you scared me silly. You have all that power, and you know so much, and you seem so confident. You deserve someone like Torbeck—"

"Torbeck!" you sputter. "He's . . . he's—"

Then you realize there's laughter in the young knight's eyes, and a new confidence when he looks at you that's wonderful to see.

His laughing look suddenly turns serious, and he bends his head toward yours. You have a sudden moment of panic and are tempted to run. But instead, you raise your head slightly so that your lips meet his.

Without even thinking, you feel yourself rising up on your toes to make it easier for his tall body to mold against yours. *I need to be held*, you think, *because my legs are melting*. Something in him must have heard your thought because his hands release yours and his arms go around you. They feel as if they've always been there, as if they'll always be there.

Suddenly, you hear from behind you the guardian naga, which you had forgotten was there.

"If you're quite finished with all these declarations of eternal love," it says, "you might like to know where the dragon is." Then it adds, "And by the way, thank you for freeing me."

You and Coren part, laughter replacing the feel of the other's lips and making it impossible to be embarrassed with each other.

Coren, reaching for one of your hands as if he can't bear to be separated, bows to the creature and says, "You're entirely welcome, guardian naga, sir. And we would appreciate it very much if you would tell us the present whereabouts of Raedl."

"I wonder why she has left us alone for so long," you say. "Certainly she knows we're here."

"She must be preparing something grand for you in the way of traps or tricks," says the naga.

The naga tells you how to reach the dragon's own private rooms and then adds, "And, my dear, your father will be working close by."

You and Coren, the naga slithering behind, return to the fountain room to find that Torbeck and Jancy have been investigating several nearby passages.

"You were busy doing other things," says Jancy in a teasing tone as she looks from you to Coren and back

again. "Well done," she murmurs privately to you as she turns to walk by Torbeck.

You follow the naga's directions but see no sign of the dragon. The rooms you pass through are luxuriant. You've heard tales of the eastern sultans, and you're sure that this is how they must live, with everything designed to appeal to the senses.

Then you reach a room grander than all the rest. Its walls are draped with the finest silks in a vibrant ruby color. Satin cushions are scattered across great piles of gold and silver. The colorful sparkle of emeralds, rubies, sapphires, and yellow diamonds littering the floor makes you feel as if you've walked into a rainbow. There's a wonderful scent in the air that makes you forget that you're deep underground.

And standing at ease in the middle of this startlingly beautiful room is a very handsome man. He wears a wine-colored silk doublet that emphasizes a lean but muscular body and reflects the sumptuousness of the room.

"Oh! Who are you?" you ask.

An amused smile that extends to his dark eyes crosses his face.

He can't be real! you think.

But he is real and he's bowing to you now.

"Good day, Chandelle, Jancy, Sir Torbeck, Sir Coren," he says in a smooth voice that sends shivers through you. He bows to each of you in turn. "Who am I? I'm someone who can help you find your father, Chandelle. Come with me."

You feel Coren's hand clutch yours tighter and turn for an instant to look at him. The skin is drawn tight across his cheekbones, and his jaw is clenched as if he's

working hard to hold back some strong emotion.

"What's the matter, Coren?" you whisper.

"I don't trust him!"

"But maybe he really can help!"

"Chandelle? Are you coming?" asks the striking figure impatiently. "I must be about my business."

"Lead on, Chandelle!" says Torbeck. "Let's find your father!"

You hesitate, until the man with the velvet voice says, "Well, I'll be leaving now. I thought I could rid you of your fears about your father, but you appear to require no help," and he turns to leave the room.

You look again at Coren's distrustful face and ignore the man as he walks down the corridor alone. Turn to page 97.

You see the opportunity to find your father slipping away and run after the man who offered his help. Turn to page 16.

Torn between letting Coren prove himself and helping him fight the unfriendly satyrs, you indecisively finger the chain around your neck. Then another stone flies toward you, and you know you can't leave the fight to Coren alone. Your father raised you to do your best in any situation.

"Chandelle, RUN!" Coren shouts as he pulls his helmet into place.

"I can't, Coren," you say calmly. "I have to fight. And I can, without getting hurt."

Without explaining further, you start walking toward the satyrs. For a moment, the creatures are astonished at your daring. But their wonder soon changes to rage as you approach. In their fury, they forget their slings and start throwing rocks as fast as they can. But no thrown rock can hurt you.

What you hadn't taken time to explain to Coren is that an amulet that protects you from missiles of any kind hangs from the chain around your neck. An invisible shield surrounds and protects you from any thrown object.

"Chandelle!" Coren shrieks again.

"It's all right, Coren," you say. "See? The rocks can't hurt me. But you've got to stop these beasts!"

The satyrs, frightened at seeing their rocks bounce harmlessly away from you, run when Coren's sword sweeps through the fray. Moving in the wake of your invisible shield, Coren dodges the rocks, his sword flashing and wounding each satyr it meets. Soon the battle is over.

As the last satyr dashes out of sight, Coren turns to you and raises his sword triumphantly. "We did it, Chandelle!" Then he drops his sword and gives you an

enthusiastic hug. It feels absolutely wonderful!

But then Coren realizes what he's doing and quickly releases you, blushing with embarrassment.

To ease his embarrassment, you quickly say, "Let me show you the magic pendant that helped save us."

After looking at the golden-brown gem set in silver, you and Coren mount your horses and set out again, following the centaur tracks, which are now almost lost among the smaller satyr tracks.

Soon you realize that all the tracks are heading in one direction. When you reach a point where they converge into one muddy path, Coren turns and whispers, "Wait, Chandelle. There's been so much activity along this path that I think our destination must be directly ahead. We mustn't make a sound."

"Then let's leave the horses," you suggest.

Tying Dawdle and Bilkin to a tree, you and Coren creep forward to a huge boulder. You see the muddy path disappear into the mouth of a cave.

"The centaur tracks go into the cave," Coren whispers.

"Then we'd better go in, too," you say firmly. "That must be where my father was taken."

"But, Chandelle, anything could be waiting in there! You'd better stay out here with the horses."

"He's my father, Coren." Then you think of the special help you can offer and reach into your pocket for the leather pouch of stones. "Look!" you say, pouring the stones into your hand. Coren's eyes widen as the stones rise to circle your head.

"What are they, Chandelle?"

You explain what your father told you about them, and then you scoop them back into the pouch.

"Oh! I've also got my crystal ball!" You laugh at the amazement on his face and hold up your wrist. From the golden bracelet around it dangles a small, clear crystal sphere. "See? It's just a little one, but it might warn us of danger ahead in the cave."

"My well-protected Chandelle, I would be proud to have you accompany me into the cave." And he makes a formal bow and gestures you toward the cave.

Coren leading, his sword held ready, you enter the dark mouth of the cave. You feel protected as you walk behind the knight, but each step that you take deeper into the unknown darkness makes you increasingly apprehensive. Then you round a corner and see a faint light ahead, enough light so that you can see into your crystal ball. Relieved that it reveals no creature waiting for you, you breathe more easily and become curious about where you are.

As you walk, the light increases until you can see more of your surroundings. The dark rock of the passageway walls is worn smooth. As the light grows brighter, you realize that the rock itself, and the floor under your cream-colored leather boots as well, is a deep, luminous red, almost the color of blood.

Rounding a corner, you stop abruptly, blinded by the bright light given off by torches mounted on the wall. Once your eyes adjust to the light, you can see that you have entered a small but richly furnished room! A plush carpet cushions your feet, and a soft couch dotted with a scattering of patterned cushions stands invitingly against one wall. The torches are mounted in ornate jeweled holders, and the walls are veiled in heavy velvet curtains that seem to deny the fact that you are in a cave.

"Do you suppose someone lives here?" you ask.

"It certainly isn't a usual cave," Coren replies.

"Maybe I can find someone," you suggest.

Holding your braceleted wrist in front of you, you peer down into the crystal sphere. You turn slowly, letting the crystal ball reveal all directions.

You're about to say that no one is near when you detect movement in the ball. "Coren!" you whisper harshly. "Someone's coming! Behind us!"

Coren quickly plasters himself to the wall beside the door, sword raised and shield firmly in front of him. "Get behind me, Chandelle!"

You've just moved back against the wall when you hear a rustling sound coming from the doorway. You feel Coren tense, ready to wield his sword. The sound of movement stops and a voice comes from the passageway:

"Now, if the young man holding that sword so fiercely will kindly lower it, I'll enter the room." The voice is low, gently accented, and lyrical.

You feel Coren startle, but he doesn't lower his sword. You, on the other hand, want to know who or what is beyond the doorway. Unfortunately, your crystal ball is too small to provide a clear view.

"Put it down, Coren!" you demand in a whisper.

"But we don't know who it is!" he insists.

"And we'll never find out if you don't lower your sword!" you say fiercely.

"We seem to be getting nowhere," the voice says. "Well, I'm coming in. I'll just have to trust that you won't use that sword on me."

Into the room glides a woman with long, gleaming black hair tumbling over her shoulders. She is dressed

in wine-red velvet decorated with brilliant jewels of many colors. You feel Coren's sword arm jump slightly in astonishment as she turns toward him, and you see that she is breathtakingly beautiful. Her skin has the glowing translucence of a prize pearl, and her eyes, which are slightly slanted, appear to contain the knowledge of the world in their dark depths.

"And who have we here?" she asks. You note that her dark eyes focus fully on Coren, and somehow you don't feel included in her question.

"I'm called Sir Coren, milady," Coren stammers, as his sword arm drops.

You watch, surprised and dismayed, as you see Coren blush and look pleased. You doubt if he's even aware that you're still behind him.

Well, he's going to be aware, you think to yourself. You move out from behind him and say icily, "And I am Chandelle. Who are you?"

The raven-haired woman steps back slightly and slowly looks you up and down with an air of total indifference, making you feel small, insignificant, and ugly. She seems to reject you as beneath her notice and turns back to Coren. As a catlike smile flickers on her face, she says, "I am called Wyvella. What brings you here?"

She listens to Coren's explanation without comment. You're not certain, but you think you see that same glimmer of a smile cross her face when Coren explains about your father's kidnapping. Coren doesn't seem to notice, though, and goes right on with his story.

You feel your anger building as they talk. *Why, Coren is actually enjoying this,* you think heatedly.



After Coren relates all the factors leading up to your present predicament, the woman seems lost in thought for a long moment. Finally she says, "I'm sure there's an explanation for all this. Please accept my assistance, Sir Coren. I'd be happy to take you farther into the cave to see what we can find out."

"I think we can find out what we need to know for ourselves," you interrupt coolly.

Coren appears to notice you for the first time since the lovely woman entered the room.

"But, Chandelle, if Mistress Wyvella is willing to help, we certainly ought to accept her gracious offer."

"If Mistress Wyvella wishes to help, then perhaps she wouldn't mind telling us why she is living here in this cave." You try to speak calmly and evenly, but you hear anger creeping into your voice and know that you're beginning to sound childish and silly.

An enigmatic smile flits across Wyvella's face. Ignoring your question, she says calmly, "Well, Sir Coren, what shall it be? Do you desire my help or not?"

"Chandelle? What do you want to do?" Coren asks.

Do you want to follow Wyvella farther into the cave, hoping she can help find your father? If so, turn to page 26.

Or will you leave Coren and Wyvella and, trusting your magical gems, go on alone to find your father? Turn to page 36.

Jancy's been with us all along, you think. She's been a good companion and very helpful. I can't disbelieve her now! But then the lady in blue groans as Torbeck fumbles with her chain and you wonder if you've made that decision out of jealousy.

Quickly, before you change your mind, you call, "Torbeck, come here a minute, please!" The knight looks up at you, puzzled.

"Please!" you say again as he turns back to his task. He pats the woman's hand and walks over to you.

Speaking urgently, you tell him what Jancy said.

"A trap? I don't see how it can be!" he says in disbelief.

"I don't either, but let's go on and try to find my father. We can come back here and release her later."

Very reluctantly, Torbeck agrees. He kneels beside the woman and tells her that he'll be back, then rises and walks swiftly out of the torture chamber. Ignoring the anguish on the woman's face, you quickly follow.

Hurrying to catch up with the knight, you reach for his hand, but he pulls it away and says coolly, "Let's find your father. That's what we're here for."

Having second thoughts about your decision, you follow around the corner the man you have come to love.

And there before you is your father . . . no, the dragon! The figure that you mistook for your beloved parent, stands facing Torbeck, glee on its face, changing from the familiar features of your father into those of a huge ruby dragon!

"Have you played enough, young man?" Raedl says. "Thank you for not releasing the lady in blue. It took all my magical powers to convert a cloud giant,

who seems determined to kill me, into a shape I could capture."

If we had freed her, the giant could have helped us! you think. Knowing that you must do whatever you can to make up for your wrong decision, you force your eyes away from the dragon that towers above you in the passageway.

Anything might happen, you acknowledge to yourself, but I have to do what I can. You concentrate on the purple spell stone, and as you close your eyes, you see it begin to glow and vibrate.

Please turn to page 109.

When Antha relays your message of thanks, the dolphins slap the water with their tails and swim away, but not very far. As the mermaids gather up their golden strands again, you see the dolphins swimming in large circles around you.

This time you don't settle back to enjoy the ride. Something about the dolphins is making you uneasy.

Soon you realize that the mermaids' high-pitched chattering among themselves is very subdued.

"Is anything wrong, Antha?" you ask.

The mermaid swims back to your boat and says, "No, not really." She looks quizzically at the dolphins. "I just don't understand why they're staying around. I told them your decision."

"Ignore them," advises Coren.

Antha returns to the head of the mermaids.

Still the dolphins linger nearby.

An hour or so later, a large mound of rocks juts out of the sea. For a moment you think you see the burgundy-colored dolphin by the rocks, but when you look again you realize you must have imagined it.

The mermaids slow the boat and stop it gently in a quiet cove among the rocks.

"The underwater entrance is somewhere around here," Antha says. "But we have to leave now. The waters around this rock are definitely not mermaid territory." She shivers and says sadly, "More than one of us has disappeared around here."

"All right, Antha," you say as she swims away. "Thank you for your help. We'll find the underwater entrance ourselves."

Please turn to page 85.

Looking intently at Jancy's lively, open face, you find it impossible to believe that she might be involved in some sort of evil trap.

"I'm sure the witch will be able to help us," you say. "We'll go see her in the morning."

That night, you share a room with Jancy. You stay awake for a while chatting worriedly about your father, but soon you realize that not much worries the half-ling. You stop talking and drift off into restless slumber in which a red-colored dragon looms large in your dreams.

At dawn the next morning, Torbeck rides next to you, as you follow Jancy's sleek pony, Gooseberry, into the woods. You're just beginning to hope she isn't leading you into a trap when you reach a house set into the side of a hill. Only its door and front window are visible.

At the sound of your horses, a woman comes to the door. Her gentle face is surrounded by a white wimple that soars up from the shoulders of her gray gown to cover her hair. *Not what I thought a witch would look like*, you think.

As she greets Jancy, who introduces you and Sir Torbeck as her friends, you bring Dawdle to a halt and say, "Good morrow, ma'am. We've come—"

"To find your father, of course." The witch completes the sentence with certainty, as if there could be no question about why you have come. "Enter the house of Grantia. We will ask the spirit of the crystal ball to help you."

You jump off Dawdle, but before the others can dismount, the witch says, "You must come alone, daughter. The ball will speak only to you and me."

"No, Chandelle!" exclaims Sir Torbeck, deep concern written on his face. "You mustn't go in there alone!"

"Why not?" you ask.

"Well . . . we don't know Jancy or this woman. What if this is a plot? Anything might happen, and . . ." His voice drops to a low whisper that only you can hear. ". . . I certainly wouldn't want anything to happen to you."

Smiling with pleasure at his words, you turn to the witch, but she anticipates you. "This is a house for women alone!" she says firmly.

"How did she know you would be coming?" Torbeck whispers. "I don't trust her! I can handle that dragon without her help!"

"Thank you for being so concerned, Torbeck, but I have to find out what she knows." Impulsively, you reach up and squeeze his hand briefly. "I'll be all right."

Turning swiftly, you walk into the small, modest yet mysterious house. The witch enters behind you, closes the door, and moves smoothly past you.

As your eyes adjust to the dimness of the small room, you see that the witch has already seated herself at a table and is staring into a large crystal ball. You realize that it is beginning to glow slightly.

"Sit, Chandelle," commands Grantia. "Your sight will be needed, too, if we intend to persuade the spirit of the ball to show us all it knows."

You sit down opposite the witch and peer intently into the sphere. All you see is a swirling mist within. Then you hear Grantia say, "Ah-h-h!" with a sigh of satisfaction.

"I see nothing," you say as the mists refuse to part.

"Hush, child. It will come clear." She pauses and then adds, "Yes. As I thought—the red dragon."

"What do you see?" you ask urgently.

"I see only what the ball will show me," Grantia replies cryptically.

You start to retort, "That's no help!" when the swirls in the ball part, revealing a large chamber in a cavern in which you see a figure working at a bench, pounding something with a small hammer.

"Father!" you exclaim excitedly.

Unblinking, you stare at the tiny scene, relieved to see your father alive. You're watching him so intently that you almost miss the movement at the back of the chamber shown in the crystal ball.

"We must stop!" says Grantia quickly, and she starts to pull a black cloth over the ball.

"No! Wait!" you demand, and you reach out and grab the witch's hand, preventing her from covering the ball. "I must see whether he is in chains."

"Oh-h-h-h," moans Grantia. "Too late!"

You look into the ball, and your eyes widen at the sight of a huge dragon behind your father. The dragon's deep ruby color seems to glow with a light of its own. But even more brilliant is the gold brilliance of her eyes as they stare straight at you.

"It's as though she sees me!" you gasp.

"Raedl has powers beyond imagining," the witch says sadly, pulling the black cloth over the ball. This time you do nothing to stop her.

"Now Raedl has seen you. She knows you are looking for your father, and you will not be able to move in secrecy. It will be very difficult for you to reach him



and get him safely away." Then she adds, as if to herself, "And now she knows I've been watching her."

For a moment your own fear is overcome by your concern for the witch.

"Will the dragon harm you?"

"Well . . . no. I will be gone from here very quickly. And you must, too. Take your friends and go, at once. Take the path into the woods. Now go!"

As you heed her urging, you thrust a silver coin in her hand, turn, and run through the doorway.

"Something went wrong!" you exclaim to Torbeck and Jancy as you mount Dawdle. "She says the dragon knows I saw her in the crystal ball."

Torbeck's smile of welcome at seeing you safe changes rapidly into a frown of concern.

"Thank you, Grantia!" you call to the witch who stands in the doorway. "I'm sorry if I endangered you." And you wave your good-bye.

"What did she say?" asks Torbeck.

"Once the dragon saw us, she didn't have time to say much. But she did say to take the path into the woods."

"That's not much help!" he exclaims.

"If Grantia bothered to say it at all, she meant it to be helpful," says Jancy.

"I think we should go back to the inn and learn the way to the sage's house," says Torbeck.

If that is your choice, turn to page 47.

"Let's take the path into the woods," says Jancy.

"I'm sure Grantia said it for a reason."

If you agree, turn to page 44.

"Anything could be waiting for us down that passageway," you point out. "But the naga does seem sincere."

"How can you trust a snake?" growls Torbeck.

"I'd really like to take a look at the pool that can work such powerful magic on all those creatures," says Coren thoughtfully.

"Maybe we can stop Raedl by doing something to the pool. I'd like that!" chimes in Jancy enthusiastically.

"All right," you agree, "but we've got to fight the naga first."

Torbeck and Coren draw their swords and walk toward the naga, separating to attack it from two sides.

The naga raises its head higher and sways backward. "Now, gentlemen. I told you I would have to guard the pool. You should have listened." And it rears back and spits a thick, orange fluid straight at Coren's neck.

"Arghhhhh! It's poison!" Coren screams, and he sinks to the floor as you watch, horrified.

"Your intentions were good, I admit," says the naga sadly, "but I am forced to do my job."

Oh, my love! you think as you leap toward Coren.

Behind you, Jancy, taking advantage of the naga's attention to Coren, leaps into the air and somersaults onto the creature's back. "Come on, Torbeck!" she shouts, challenge in her tone.

As Coren writhes on the ground, you drop to his side and cradle him against you.

"Please don't die! Please!" you say under your breath.

"Go help Torbeck," Coren says in a voice so weak

you can barely make out what he's saying.

"He's doing fine," you say gently. "I have to help you. I can't just let you die. You . . . you mean too much to me." A slight smile comes to his lips, but his eyes close and his skin begins to turn a horrible gray.

Chandelle, you tell yourself, don't let him see you cry! Don't let him know how sick he looks. Think! What can you do? We need some quiet!

Ignoring the commotion of battle behind you, you stand and put your hands under the young knight's arms. Slowly . . . painfully slowly . . . you drag Coren's muscular body around the corner, away from the fray. Then, kneeling down with his head resting on your lap, you take a deep breath and try to clear your mind of everything but the need to help Coren.

Don't hear the noise of fighting, you tell yourself. Just think about Coren! Panic, go away. Fear, go away. You feel yourself relax a bit, and your mind starts to concentrate only on the need for Coren to fight the poison. Let his body be strong and healthy again. Please! There must be one of the stones in the ring around my head that will let Coren be well again! Work now, whichever stone you are!

You suddenly realize that the lustrous round pearl in the ring of ioun stones is vibrating, glowing slightly.

Oh, beautiful pearl! you concentrate. You were placed in this ring for something very important. There's nothing more important to me at this moment than Coren. Please let him be well. Let the poison leave him!

Hugging Coren tightly to you, you feel some of the life come back into his body, and you finally get the courage to look down at his gray face again. But it is no

longer gray! The healthy color has returned and his eyelids begin to flutter!

"Chandelle," he murmurs. "I dreamed I was losing you. I was walking farther and farther away from you. I tried to call, but you were . . . so far away."

The young knight's eyes open wide and see you leaning over him. "But you're here! Right here with me! You haven't left . . . and now I can love you." Your heart pounds in your chest so loudly you know he must feel it.

Coren struggles to sit up, and something inside you says, *Let me keep holding you!* But aloud all you can say is, "Let me . . ." and put your hand on his arm.

"I'm all right, thanks to your magic. You are an enchanted woman, my beautiful Chandelle, my treasure!" He raises his hand to your face and you feel his fingers gently trace the top of your cheekbone. And you discover for the first time in your life that there can be as much meaning in the touch of a finger as in an ardent kiss.

You sit perfectly still, wanting desperately to put your hand on his but afraid to do so, afraid to break the spell of the moment.

He looks at you questioningly. "Can't you say anything, Chandelle?"

You long to burst out, "I love you, Coren. You make me feel things I've never felt before, feel a strength I've never known before!" But the thought of saying such things aloud makes you feel vulnerable, open to ridicule.

You start to say, "Coren, I . . ." when the sound of clashing metal and cries of triumph come to you from the next room.

Coren springs to his feet, asking, "Where are Torbeck and Jancy?"

"They're fighting the naga," you confess, ashamed that you had forgotten your companions for the moment. Coren dashes back around the corner.

You rest there for a moment, disappointed that you had not had the courage to say the things you truly felt. But then you hear the clash again and rush out to join the fight.

You find Jancy still perched on the naga's back, looking worn but triumphant. Torbeck and Coren both hold swords to its head but stand at its neck where its venom cannot reach them. The giant snake has a patient look on its face.

"All right," it says, sighing deeply. "We're at a stand-off. You could probably kill me now, but not before my bite would poison that pretty woman who just entered." You dart back around the corner and listen as the naga continues. "I don't want that and you don't want that. If you're determined to go to the pool, go! I won't stop you. But make me a promise."

You hear the others agree.

"If you discover how to counteract Raedl's magic, I would certainly like to be a nice fellow again."

"It's a deal," you say firmly, entering the room. The men reluctantly lower their swords and the guardian naga turns its back while the four of you go down the passage where it indicated that the magical pool would be found.

For a few steps, Torbeck walks backward, his sword ready. "It might be a trick."

But there seems to be no trick, and a short distance ahead you catch a glimpse of light reflecting on water.

When you enter the chamber, you see a large circular pool in a basin of pink marble. As you watch, fresh water continuously bubbles up into the middle of it, but it never seems to overflow. A collection of jewel-encrusted pots is piled next to the pool.

The earth around the fountain is a mass of tracks. Every creature for miles around must come here frequently to drink. But there is no sign of anything near it now.

"What makes it magical, I wonder," comments Jancy.

"It looks like regular water," you reply. "But maybe Raedl put a spell on it." You think a moment and then add, "One of the few magic spells my father ever taught me directly is the Stonetell Spell. He frequently used it to discover the history and the inner flaws of gemstones, so that he could cut them more perfectly."

Concentrating on the pink marble of the fountain, you speak the words of the Stonetell Spell. After you finish, there is silence in the large chamber and Torbeck starts to scoff, "Some magic sp—" But he is interrupted by a huge, echoing voice that rumbles out of the stone:

"I was formed in the earth and have come out of the earth to hold water for the creatures of the earth. But the water holds no refreshment. The water holds only evil, put there by the ruby dragon. She is a creature of death, not of life."

Torbeck, Jancy, and Coren stand there, awestruck at hearing the marble speak, but you ask, "How can we stop the red dragon and make your water pure again?"

"Raedl has put death into the water. She will find death in the water," the stone of the fountain answers.

You don't understand what the voice means, but you go on and ask, "How can we remove the evil from your water?"

"The spell must be withdrawn from within me," the marble says.

"Will my ioun stones do that?" you ask.

"What magic has done, magic can undo," rumbles the fountain.

Taking that answer as yes, you tell the others, "I must climb into the fountain. Please hold my cloak."

Torbeck holds out his arm, but Coren, horror on his face, says, "Chandelle! You mustn't! Anything could happen!"

To yourself, you say, *Maybe he really does care enough for me to tell him how I feel!* But to him, you say, "Don't worry, Coren. The ioun stones will protect me."

Removing your slippers and holding your dress high, you step up into the fountain. The water is cool but has a slightly unpleasant clinging feel to it against your skin.

You stand in the middle of the fountain and concentrate on the stones in the ring around your head. *Relieve this fountain of its magic spell*, you think. *Let the water be fresh and pure.* The lavender and green stones start to tremble and glow, casting a strange purplish light around your head. You close your eyes against the distracting glow.

Suddenly, you hear the others gasp, and you open your eyes to see radiant flashes of ruby light radiating from the water around you and going into the lavender and green stone by your head. Afraid to move, you remain perfectly still until the flashes cease. You realize

that the water has lost its unpleasant clingy feeling. You step lightly out of the fountain, and the others crowd around you.

"Do you think it worked?" asks Jancy excitedly.

"We'll know in a moment," says Coren. "I hear hooves!"

All four of you hurry away from the fountain and hide in an opening off the room just before two centaurs—perhaps the ones who kidnapped your father—enter the chamber snarling at each other. They drink deeply from the fountain and then stand talking for a few minutes. You don't understand their language, but you can tell they're excited about something. You wish you knew what!

Then Jancy, whose skills as a thief include speaking many languages, whispers, "They're saying that the water tastes different than usual . . . and that always before, when they've satisfied their thirst, they've rushed to do the dragon's bidding. But now they know they don't belong here. Oh, Chandelle! They're going to leave and return to their own kind in the forest! Your magic worked!" Smiling with pleasure at the sight, you watch the two centaurs trot away to freedom.

If only my magic could help us find my father! you think. Maybe the fountain will tell me more.

Aloud you say, "Marble fountain, if you can still speak, tell me of a man brought here by the dragon."

But the Stonetell Spell is wearing off and all the fountain says is, "Good man. Loves stone." As the last word dwindles, the spell has ended.

"Oh, Chandelle," says Jancy sadly, "I'm sorry you didn't get an answer. You helped all those creatures by removing the dragon's spell from the fountain. You

deserve some help, too!" You smile at the halfling, pleased by her concern.

"That's what I'm here for," says Torbeck firmly, "to help Chandelle."

You wait a second, hoping Coren will add something. But when he remains silent, you say, "That's why you're all here—and I thank you very much."

The others move away to explore the large chamber further. You stare after Coren, your thoughts in a turmoil.

Oh, why do I feel one minute as if he really cares and then the next think it's all wishful thinking on my part? If I tell him how I feel, will he be happy to hear it? Maybe he didn't really mean what he said after the stone healed him, and he's regretting it now—after all, he was still groggy. Maybe I'd better wait for him to speak.

Your heart pounds nervously as you realize that you must make a decision because you won't be able to think of anything else until you do. You'll all be leaving in a moment to find your father!

*If you want to tell Coren how much you like him,
turn to page 117.*

*But if you think you should wait until Coren
makes his feelings clear, turn to page 62.*

Coren wants to show me that he's a real knight who can be depended on, you think. Well, maybe I can seem helpless and dependent.

"Oh, Coren," you say aloud, "I'm so glad you're with me. What would I do without you?"

A glorious smile spreads across Coren's lean face, and he says, "You're wonderful, Chandelle! Quick! Get back behind that tree with the horses."

You lead Dawdle and Bilkin into the woods and hide behind a large tree from which you peek out to see Coren charge the satyrs.

The goatlike creatures scatter throughout the woods, forcing Coren to keep turning and dashing in different directions to reach them with his sword. But he's quick and puts many out of battle.

"Oh, my brave knight!" you whisper half aloud.

But then you see another satyr by a tree to your right. He has a very large stone in his sling.

"Coren!" you shout, but even as you say it, the satyr releases the sling, firing the stone which hits the valiant knight on the side of his head, knocking off his helmet. His muscular body slides limply to the ground.

Forgetting all danger, you run to Coren and kneel by his side. You see no sign of life, only a thin stream of blood trickling from the wound on the side of his head. It is too late even for the magic pearl of healing.

Overcome with grief, you do not struggle when the satyrs grab you and bind you. As they lift you and start to trot through the forest, you hear one of them say, "The ruby dragon will want her."

THE END

"Dawdle was restless before," you say. "And it turned out to be just her reaction to enchantment. Maybe the same thing is happening now. I want to go on. But be prepared for anything!"

Torbeck draws his sword and moves ahead of you. As you look at his broad back, you realize that it is very nice to feel protected. Jancy looks fiercely from left to right, her small dagger held out in front of her.

Dawdle plods on, now and then giving a little prance of restlessness. Suddenly, Torbeck's horse, Bilkin, whinnies and stops abruptly. Behind you, you hear Jancy gasp and say, "Look!"

There in the path ahead of you is the most beautiful animal you have ever seen—a magnificent, snowy white unicorn!



The creature rises high on its hind legs, its single spiral horn reaching into the branches above, and you realize it's going to attack!

"Move!" shouts Torbeck, his horse dashing ahead.

But you're too late! The unicorn's hooves crash down toward you, missing your head by inches and frightening Dawdle.

"Easy, girl! Easy!" You try frantically to calm Dawdle, aware at each moment that the raging unicorn is rising, preparing to strike again.

Then, behind you, Jancy says in a determined voice, "I'll get it!" And she somersaults through the air onto the back of the white animal. Puzzled to find someone riding it, the unicorn drops its front hooves to the ground without striking anything.

Seeing Torbeck about to lunge at the unicorn with his sword, you shriek, "No! Don't hurt it!"

Jancy chimes in, "No, Sir Torbeck! I'm getting it under control." And indeed she is. The animal's frightened bucking gradually abates as she leans forward and whispers something in its ear. Finally, it stops entirely and stands still, looking at you calmly for the first time.

Dawdle, too, seems to know that she no longer has anything to fear and settles down.

"What a girl!" says Torbeck, smiling at Jancy.

She blushes but looks pleased as she says, "Well, nobody ever asked if a thief could also be an acrobat."

Torbeck rides to the halfling's side, grabs her around the waist, and pulls her off the unicorn over to his horse. "Come away from that unpredictable creature, little one," he says gently.

He never did that to me! you think, a strange combination of anger and self-pity welling up inside you. It's an unpleasant feeling and you feel your jaw harden as you ride up to Bilkin.

"Thank you, Jancy. That was very brave." She looks puzzled at the slight coldness in your voice.

What's wrong with you, Chandelle! you say angrily to yourself. Then you add, aloud, "The unicorn seems to be all right now. Let's go."

Riding on down the path, you listen to Torbeck and Jancy, now back on her pony Gooseberry, chatter on about the unicorn. But you take no part in the discussion. Only one thought keeps running through your mind: *They certainly are getting on well together! Torbeck must flirt with every girl he meets.*

In your mental turmoil, you make Dawdle move faster and faster, until you are out of sight of the others.

"Chandelle!" you hear Torbeck's voice call, but you refuse to answer.

He can just find me! you think, urging Dawdle faster until you're almost galloping down the path.

"Chandelle!" Torbeck calls. "What's the matter with you?" And you feel a certain satisfaction in hearing his charger galloping after you even as you recognize that you're being childish.

Looking around, you realize that you have entered a rocky area and that Dawdle is going dangerously fast. But just as you start to rein her in, she stops abruptly of her own accord. Bilkin pulls up right behind you.

"What was that all ab—" Torbeck starts to ask angrily, but you just point among the rocks in front of you. There is a large opening and what looks like the beginning of a tunnel.

"Are we here, girl? Is this Raedl's lair?" you ask Dawdle, patting her neck. The horse nods and paws the ground.

Anger forgotten, you turn excitedly to Torbeck. "She got us here! The witch was right!"

The knight shouts, "Whoopee!" and pulls you to him in a big hug. Your anger and jealousy dissolve in the joyous feeling of achievement. And when Jancy rides up behind Torbeck, you feel only gladness as the

knight reaches back and includes her in the big hug.

"All right," you finally say firmly, "let's go."

"We should picket the horses nearby and return for them later," Torbeck suggests.

You agree and dismount, looking for a good place to leave the horses. Fortunately, there's a stream and a small clearing carpeted with grass nearby.

As you enter the tunnel your eyes open wide, and you find yourself gasping in surprise at the gold, the gems, the silks and satins, used to decorate the passageways and chambers of Raedl's lair.

"This dragon certainly likes finery," you say.

"I just hope she doesn't consider us a fine dinner!" replies Jancy. Then she says, "Sh-h-h! I think I hear something."

You and Torbeck make no sound, trying to listen for whatever sound the halfling's acute hearing caught.

Tap-tap-tap.

"It's Father!" you exclaim, your face lighting up. "I'm sure that's him. I've heard the sound of his hammer on gold all my life." You run ahead.

"Wait, Chandelle!" calls Torbeck, urgency in his voice.

Reluctantly, you slow your step and turn back. "What is it?"

"It might be a trap! Remember, Grantia was sure Raedl knew you were coming here. If she's smart, she's not going to let you rescue your father so easily."

"A trap?" you repeat. "Jancy, halflings are talented when it comes to finding traps. Can you see anything?"

The halfling looks around and says, a little sadly, "Raedl wouldn't use the kind of trap I can detect. I can

only find knives on springs, trapdoors, things like that."

"Well, we'll just have to be as careful as we can," you declare, and, more cautiously than before, you turn back toward the passageway.

Following the sound of the tap-tap, you slowly advance down the narrow corridor. You peek around each corner, hoping to spot enemies before they ambush you. But the way remains clear, and you allow yourself to relax enough to appreciate the sweeping draperies of cloth woven with golden threads, the great mounds of brocade and satin cushions, and the flashing chains of gems accenting wall and ceiling alike.

Soon you round a corner and the tap-tap sounds very near.

"Look!" you whisper. "There's a bright light in that room ahead. The sound seems to be coming from there." You creep to the doorway, the others following close behind. As you silently peek around the doorjamb you see your father standing at a workbench.

"Father!" you shout. Unable to resist the temptation to go to him, you rush into the brightly lit room.

A slender man dressed in fine black and red leather bends over a table. His small hammer is silent as he turns toward you, delight and . . . some other emotion that you don't immediately recognize, mixed on his face.

He hesitates briefly and then exclaims, "Chandelle!" He lays down his hammer and sweeps you into a big hug.

You close your eyes in the security of your father's arms and wait for him to ruffle your hair as he always does . . . But the familiar gesture doesn't come.

"Oh, my daughter, I thought never to see you again!"

Finally, you stand back, still clutching his arm, and say, "Father, these friends have been helping me hunt for you."

As he reaches out his hand to shake Torbeck's, you notice that your father is not bound in any way. *Why didn't he try to escape?* you wonder.

"Let's hurry and get out of here," you say, suddenly feeling panicky.

"Oh, but . . . m-my things . . ." stammers your father.

Then Torbeck says, "What about the dragon?"

"Yeah. Are we going after her or not?" asks Jancy.

You notice a brief look of satisfaction cross your father's face as he says, "I can show you how to find her."

You pause a moment, wondering why your relief at finding your father is turning to confusion. Then you realize that the others are looking at you as if to ask why you don't answer your father's offer . . . or is he really your father?

*If you have doubts about this man really being
your father and want to make sure,
turn to page 84.*

*But if you decide you're just imagining things
and know this man to be your father,
help Jancy and Torbeck find the dragon's
treasure. Turn to page 28.*

The captain smiles and says, "Thank you. I was sure you would understand." Then he signals to his helmsman, and you feel the ship change course toward the island.

You wonder for a moment if the decision to let Captain Seacleaver make a stop was a good one.

But he seems so confident that he's right to do so, you think. I shouldn't be angry because my quest for Father is being ignored. We'll be on our way soon.

A while later, the boat pulls into a somewhat tumbled-down dock. Many people—humans, half-lings, elves, and others—sit comfortably on the dock or on the beach nearby. They welcome your boat with wide smiles and help you and the others disembark.

Leading you to comfortable chairs under a shady tree, they present you with large woven trays of the petals, stems, and fruit of a beautiful ivory flower.

The nectar the happy people offer you is refreshing, and you feel your restlessness at the delay drain away. While you nibble on a luscious ivory-colored petal, you begin to ponder the meaning of the ivory color.

The meaning of ivory becomes a subject of great importance to you, and you discuss it in leisurely fashion with your friends, while continuing to nibble the delicious food, which you learn is called lotus.

Nothing else seems of importance, certainly not the fact that Captain Seacleaver, beginning to look peculiarly like a ruby-colored dragon, smiles with satisfaction in your direction, returns to his boat, and sails away.

THE END

Coren looks startled and seems to snap out of Wyvella's enchantment at your reminder that he's on a quest. He looks once more at Wyvella and turns slightly red, then stammers, "Th-thank you for your help, Wyvella. Chandelle and I will look for her father together. He must be around here somewhere."

You and Coren walk rapidly away from Wyvella into the chambers of the ruby dragon. You turn many corners in looking for clues to your father's presence, continuously searching your crystal ball for any warning of danger ahead. Seeing none for several minutes, you begin to relax and enjoy the many visual surprises the cavern contains. Gradually, however, a sound begins to penetrate the silence of the cave. You become aware that for some time you have been hearing a faint tapping sound in the distance.

"What's that sound?" you whisper urgently.

Coren stands still and listens. "I don't kn—"

"It's him!" you interrupt. "Listen!" And then you distinctly hear a metallic tap-tap-tap.

"That's him!" you exclaim. "I'm sure that noise is my father working on gold with his hammer! I've heard that sound all my life. Come on!" And you run quickly down the passage toward the sound.

"Slow down, Chandelle," Coren says. "The dragon might be with your father!"

"Oh!" Stopping abruptly, you turn back toward the young knight behind you. Concern for you shows on his furrowed brow. *That's no way to treat such a handsome face*, you think. *I should try not to cause him such worry*. But you're pleased that he cares.

As Coren joins you, he smiles and says, "I really would like an opportunity to get to know you better.

And I don't think I'll have a chance to if you go dashing headlong into the dragon."

Side by side, you walk on, looking at your crystal ball and listening for the alluring tapping sound.

Finally, you're certain that the source of the sound is just around the corner.

Coren tiptoes ahead of you and stands on the opposite side of an iron door. As you join him, you see that the door is just slightly ajar. Your crystal ball reveals a tall, thin man standing at a workbench on the other side of the door.

"It's him!" you mouth to Coren, your face glowing with relief at finding your father alive. You make a gesture indicating that you're going to push the door open. Coren raises his sword, ready for anything, and nods for you to go ahead.

Your heart pounding mightily, you push lightly at the door and look into a large chamber, a fire burning in the middle. No one is in sight. As you open the door farther, you again hear the familiar metallic tap-tap.

"Father!" you shout excitedly, pushing the door completely open.

And there, indeed, is your father, standing at a workbench, hammer in hand. But as you take in the frightened look on his face, you realize that someone is standing behind the door. Cautiously you peer through the slit between door and doorjamb, and you see Wyvella, a look of proud satisfaction on her face.

"Wyvella! You've found my father!" you exclaim, but then bewilderment overwhelms your excitement and you burst out, "Why wasn't your presence revealed in my crystal ball?"

"My magic must be stronger than yours," she purrs

her eyes flashing with satisfaction.

But your father stiffly shakes his head and then shouts out, "That's not Wyvella. It's the dragon!"

And out of the mouth of the beautiful, mysterious woman comes a roar of rage. As the sound rolls over you, you watch, your eyes wide with astonishment and fear, as she transforms into a huge ruby-colored dragon.

You stand frozen with fear until you feel Coren grab your hand and pull you behind him. Then your fear changes to horror as you watch the man you're beginning to care about advance on the dragon with his sword drawn.

You edge over toward your father and whisper, "What can we do?"

"You've may have brought the answer with you," he says.

"Coren?"

"No, though he looks like one answer for you. No, I'm talking about the ioun stones I had with me. Do you have them?"

"Yes, but I've been afraid to use them," you confess. All the time you've talked, your eyes have been following the movement of the brave knight. Raedl seems to be teasing him with lashing movements of her tail, but you know that at any moment she could become vicious.

"Take out the stones." You do as your father says, and the stones rise and circle your head.

"Ignore what's going on around you, Chandelle," says your father. "Think only about the purple stone and about your need for help from whatever power is in it."

Closing your mind to all else but your father's words, you concentrate on the deep purple gem that hovers in front of your forehead.

Your thoughts turn inward and find a calmness that centers on the power in the spell stone. Soon the edge of your mind notices that the purple stone is vibrating and that it has begun to glow.

"That's it," your father says encouragingly.

Into the calmness comes the word "change." It demands that you notice it and think about it. Then, from nowhere, two phrases enter your thoughts:

Stone of Fire, Stone of Light,

CHANGE the dragon with your might.

A gasp from your father breaks your concentration, and your thoughts turn outward again.

The dragon is gone. Coren lunges forward with his mighty sword thrust at . . . nothing! A look of astonishment crosses his face.

"She's gone! The dragon is gone!" he exclaims.

"No, she's not!" says your father, laughing. "Look!" And he points to the spot where Raedl had stood. There is a small rust-colored cat, spitting and hissing at you, its tail fluffed out in rage.

Coren bursts into laughter, which only makes the cat spit more. Then he says, "Now I know what Wyvella reminded me of—it wasn't a dragon but a cat!"

"Father, Coren, let's get out of here," you say, "before we run into anything else."

Using your crystal ball every step of the way this time, you manage to avoid other creatures and find your way safely out of the cave into a fresh, moonlit evening. Dawdle and Bilkin stand tied to the tree where you left them.

Coren takes you with him on his great cinnamon horse, leaving Dawdle for your father to ride. And as the knight's strong arm encircles you, holding you securely in front of him, you hear the story of your father's short but terrifying stay in Raedl's cave.

"She had rooms full of treasure that she wanted me to sort and mount. It would have taken a lifetime," he concludes. "I would much rather do what I have always done—travel the countryside, making a few good pieces of jewelry for people who appreciate them."

Your father turns to you and says, "But maybe you won't feel like doing that any more. Maybe you'll be afraid to travel with me now."

Before you can deny it, Coren breaks in. "Well, sir. Maybe I have an idea that will help. Why don't you hire a guard to travel with you—one who could protect you and Chandelle?"

You turn to look at the knight whose arm holds you so gently. He smiles at you a secret smile, one that holds your whole future in it. Then you turn to your father and say, "That's a good idea, Father. Let's hire a guard."

Your father smiles and asks lightly, "Do you know anyone who might want the job? After all, it could be quite taxing—keeping track of a spirited young woman like you. And who knows what the future might bring in a job like that? He might have to put up with you for the rest of his life."


And as you lean back in Sir Coren's arms, you hear him say quietly, "I hope so, sir. I certainly hope so."

THE END

The World's Most Talked About Role-Playing Game



Our DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game is the best way to enter the world of role-playing. And now the Basic Set is even easier to play. Send for your **FREE** color poster/catalog today:

 **TSR Hobbies, Inc.**
Box 756, C188EQB
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

In the UK:
TSR Hobbies, (UK) Ltd.
The Mill, Rathmore Rd.
Cambridge, ENGLAND
CB1 4AD

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is a registered trademark owned by TSR Hobbies, Inc. ©1983 TSR Hobbies, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



ENDLESS QUEST™ Books

**From the producers of the
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game**

- #1 DUNGEON OF DREAD**
- #2 MOUNTAIN OF MIRRORS**
- #3 PILLARS OF PENTEGARN**
- #4 RETURN TO BROOKMERE**
- #5 REVOLT OF THE DWARVES**
- #6 REVENGE OF THE
RAINBOW DRAGONS**
- #7 HERO OF WASHINGTON SQUARE**
based on the TOP SECRET® Game
- #8 VILLAINS OF VOLTURNUS**
based on the STAR FRONTIERS™ Game
- #9 ROBBERS AND ROBOTS**
based on the TOP SECRET® Game
- #10 CIRCUS OF FEAR**
- #11 SPELL OF THE WINTER WIZARD**
- #12 LIGHT ON QUESTS MOUNTAIN**
based on the GAMMA WORLD® Game
- #13 DRAGON OF DOOM**
- #14 RAID ON NIGHTMARE CASTLE**

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, ENDLESS QUEST, TOP SECRET, STAR FRONTIERS, and GAMMA WORLD are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.

© 1983 by TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

For a free catalog, write:

**TSR, Inc.
P.O. Box 756, Dept. EQB
Lake Geneva, WI 53147**

TSR, Inc.

DRAGON



The Official Fuel for Over 100,000 of the World's Most Imaginative Gamers

- DRAGON™ Magazine is a storehouse of information.

It's the acknowledged leader. No other hobby gaming magazine has the size and circulation.

- DRAGON™ Magazine is actually a monthly role-playing aid.

It fuels the best players with ammunition from the best writers. Imaginative articles by the co-creator of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games, E. Gary Gygax, appear in each issue. Hundreds of authors and games from all manufacturers are featured throughout. And with a cost of only \$24 for your year's supply of fuel, it's hard to imagine how you got anywhere without it!

For information write:

Subscription Department, Dragon Publishing
Box 110, C186EQB Lake Geneva, WI 53147

DRAGON™ Magazine
Box 110, C186EQB
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

In the UK:
TSR Hobbies, (UK) Ltd.
The Mill, Rathmore Rd.
Cambridge, ENGLAND
CB1 4AD



TSR Hobbies, Inc.
Products Of Your Imagination™



DRAGON is a trademark owned by TSR Hobbies, Inc. © 1983 TSR Hobbies, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

**PICK A PATH
TO ROMANCE
AND ADVENTURE™**

**Ring of the
Ruby Dragon**

You are Chandelle, apprentice to your famed jeweler father, who has been kidnapped by creatures under the mystic spell of the evil red dragon. Somehow, you must try to rescue him. Perhaps the pouch of gems with unknown magical powers will help. . .

He is Coren, a beguiling young knight hoping to prove himself on his first quest. And then there is Sir Torbeck, the older, more experienced fighter, with reasons of his own for joining you. Each one offers to help you, but each has his own way of reacting to your special magic.

Will your fantasy adventure lead you to your first romance, or will the decisions you make carry you into realms from which there is no return? In a HEARTQUEST™ book, you, the reader, are challenged to PICK A PATH TO ROMANCE AND ADVENTURE™.



394-72318-XTSR0225

ISBN 0-88038-065-9