

The Ten Gems



An Adventure Story by Class 6/7R

Chapter 1

The Adventure Begins

"Hurry up, Jessica! We are going to be late for Germany's Got Talent!"

"I'm just getting the backstage pass so that we can get Simon Powell's autograph. Is the taxi there yet?"

"Yes, it arrived five minutes ago! Hurry up!"

"I'm coming, I'm coming!" The dark haired teenager hurried out of the door of her parents' house to join her friend Jake, who was standing on the step tapping his foot impatiently. They ran across the wet lawn and clambered into the waiting cream Mercedes.

Fifteen minutes later, the taxi pulled up outside the Beethoven Halle. The pair dashed inside, not even noticing the dramatic statue of Beethoven outside. They were stopped at the door by two burly security men but when they flashed their backstage passes, they were ushered through and were escorted to their seats.

"I'm so glad you won that competition. How did you come up with the idea of 'Yummy Gummies' as the new Haribo slogan, anyway?" Jessica asked.

"It just comes naturally," replied Jake.

"Show off," Jessica muttered under her breath.

"What?"

"Nothing. Ssh, the show's starting."

The lights dimmed and the audience went quiet. One single spotlight shone on Simon Powell as he strode to the centre of the stage. His unusual necklace glinted in the light.

"What *is* that necklace?" said Jake. "He doesn't usually wear stuff like that."

"Hey look, he's just taken it off and put it in his pocket," said Jessica. "It could fall out at any moment."

But the necklace was soon put out of their minds as the show began and they were caught up in the booing and cheering of the crowd as the competitors danced, sang and showed off their skills in the various acts.

As the show ended they scurried out of their seats and ran to the backstage entrance. Jake looked at his watch.

"We're too early," he said. "The ticket says 10.30. We have to wait ten minutes."

"Shh," said Jessica. "Isn't that Simon Powell's voice?"

They moved closer to the door, straining to hear what was being said.

"....I told you, it's in Australia...no, I don't know where. Check all the major cities....yes I know Australia is big but that's what I'm paying you for. I've got plenty of other people who would like the job if you don't want it....Good. Goodbye." There was the beep of a dead line. Then the voice continued:

" Yes, my plans are almost complete! All I need is to collect the ten Jewels of Immortality to complete the necklace and I will have eternal life and rule the world!!!!

Ha, Ha, Ha!!but first - a drink."

The door suddenly swung open, almost knocking them clean off their feet. Simon

Powell stepped through. They grabbed the opportunity to get his autograph and ran up to him, programmes at the ready.

"Excuse me, may we please have your autograph?" stammered Jessica.

Simon Powell stopped and groaned.

"All right," he said, rummaging in his pockets for a pen. He pulled out a large, gold fountain pen and scribbled on the programme. As he did so, Jake noticed something fall to the ground out of Simon Powell's pocket.

"Umm, sir..." he started, but Simon cut him off.

"You've already had an autograph. How much more do you want!" and he stormed off in the direction of the bar.

Jake and Jessica stared after him.

"How rude!" said Jessica.

"Look," said Jake, pointing at the ground. "It's that weird necklace he was wearing at the start of the show. Do you think that's the one he was talking about? The one to get eternal life?"

"But surely he's not really trying to take over the world? That must have been a joke. Or perhaps he was practising for his next show."

"I don't know," said Jake doubtfully. "He sounded pretty serious." He picked up the necklace. It was a dirty gold colour with ten holes where it looked like stones would fit.

"Powell said something about ten stones. Let's see if we can find something in his room."

"You can't do that! It's private property!"

"Don't we have backstage passes?"

"That's not the point..." protested Jessica. But she was left talking to empty air as Jake had already walked into the room.

"This is so dumb. He's going to be back any second. Let's get out of here."

"Just a minute.....there's something here," Jake said, searching a jacket pocket. "Oh, it's only a set of keys."

"For goodness sake," said Jessica, as she perched on the pillow of the bed. "Wait! What's this?" She put her hand under the pillow and pulled something out. She opened her hand and on it lay a small diamond, glinting in the light.

"The diamond is the right size for the necklace holes!" said Jake. He carefully pushed the gem into one of the empty sockets in the necklace. Suddenly, the room swirled into an inky blackness.

"Quick hold on!" he shouted to Jessica, as the room dissolved around them.

Chapter 2

A Journey Down Under

BAM...they landed flat on their faces on to hard metal. The necklace skidded out of Jake's hands and landed close to a sheer drop, but slowed to a halt just before it fell.

"Ow!" Jessica and Jake said together.

Jessica got slowly to her feet... then she sat down again quickly; she let out a tiny wail.

"We're up high I'm afraid of heights," she whispered faintly. But Jack was gazing around him.

"We're over water!" he shouted over a gust of wind (the necklace wobbled dangerously near the edge), "and is that the Sydney opera house? It must be. Hey, Jessica we're in Sydney, Australia!" he shouted over yet another gust of wind (the necklace wobbled more dangerously still) .

"On the Sydney harbour bridge," Jessica said weakly. "Where is the necklace?"

Jake looked around wildly, nearly tumbling over a colossal breath of wind. He and Jessica looked around just in time to see the precious necklace tumble over the edge of the bridge. Jack dashed toward the spot where the necklace had fallen. He saw it falling.... fallingfalling ... down... down... down.... down... and suddenly a cockatoo flew past and caught it in his beak. He flew a u-turn and flew towards the opera house where he landed, necklace and all.

"We must go and get it!" Jessica squealed, not taking her eyes off the necklace in the distance.

"No we don't," Jake replied. "We have stopped Powell from getting eternal life and -"

"But how will we get home, bimbo?"

"Oh, I didn't think of that," he said, crestfallen, "but how to get it?"

They both concentrated very hard, thinking like crazy about how to get the necklace. Without any explanation at all, they both rose a few feet, levitated, suspended in mid air. Jessica screamed.

Jake's eyes widened. *Forward.* He thought. He shot forward like an arrow and crashed into one of the wires attached to the bridge.

"How do you did you do that?" Jessica said glancing worriedly around her.

"The jewel must give us a power. We must need it. Just think about were you want to go, up, forward, left, right, backwards," Jake replied, "but mind those wires they hurt".

Jessica was a bit scared at first but soon got used to the height, so with directions in their brains, they flew towards the cockatoo (a national Australian bird, usually white with a yellow frill) and the necklace. They landed neatly on the roof of the mushroom-looking building. They scared the cockatoo and it flew off, leaving the necklace behind. Jessica snatched it up and studied it.

"Hey look! Engravings. I'm almost positive they weren't there before." She read the mysterious markings out loud:

*To find the jewel you do seek
A range of creatures you shall meet.
Search upon the big red rock*

The monsters shall arrive in flock.

“What does that mean?” Jake asked.

“Don’t you see? It’s a riddle. Tell me everything you know about Australia.”

“Um, well, opals come from here; I have heard about man eating flies in the desert but that can’t be possible; and there is a desert with 2 big red rocks: Uluru, flat and red and Kata Tjuta, lumpy and red; and never trust cockatoos.” He smiled. Jessica smiled back.

“We have to go to the big red rocks –”

“UP UP AND AWAY!” Jake shouted.

“We need to ask someone. We don’t know where to go.”

Suddenly, the cockatoo that had stolen (or saved) the necklace flew down on to Jessica’s shoulder and squawked loudly.

“It all makes sense!” Jessica gasped. “He didn’t steal the necklace, he saved it, and took it up on the opera house, so we would discover our powers and now he should guide us to the red rock.”

The cockatoo squawked again and nodded his head, then flew up into the air. They followed him.

“UP, UP AND AWAY!” Jake shouted. “For real this time!”

The wind on their faces felt cool as it rippled their hair and pounded in their ears, the cockatoo a few meters in front of them.

What seemed like hours later (it probably was hours later) the two red rocks appeared in the distance.

“Nearly there!” Jessica called over the wind.

“Yep, but what could come in a flock?”

“I dunno but we will soon find out”

The heat sank through them and they could feel the sweat on their backs. They gazed over the red sand of the Australian desert; sand storms and kangaroos glided across the scorching sand. The cockatoo flew lower and lower until he landed softly on the ground, the teenagers following behind.

“Well done,” Jessica praised the cockatoo, ruffling his yellow frill.

“Where are we?” Jake asked. “I can’t see the red rocks anywhere.”

The cockatoo waddled over behind them and squawked. They turned around. A huge bumpy mountain loomed over them, black veins like cuts in the rock symbolized the homes of geckos.

“Kata Tjuta,” Jessica whispered.

“HOW DO WE GET TO ULURU?” Jake screamed. His voice echoed around the caves and cuts in the landmark, like he was waiting for the rock to reply - and it did: a musical sound, deep and low erupted like someone blowing into a log. It went up and down in its deep octave.

A black man with lots of coloured paint on his body and beads in his hair came out with a hollow tree trunk making the deep booming sound. The cockatoo squawked and flew on to the man’s shoulder. The man dropped his log and stroked the cockatoo’s feathers.

“G’day my friends, my name is Bob. I see you have make acquaintances with cocky my cockatoo. E is so brave to fly all the way to Sydney to get you and to help you discover

your power and bring you to me. I shall help you now, and we shall get the jewel and stop Powell getting eternal life,” the old man said in a gruff voice.

“How do you know about Powell?” Jake asked.

“I have heard from my son far away in Perth. Powell is very famous,” he replied. “I am an aboriginal native Australian. Now come and sleep in my cave for the journey tomorrow.” They were ushered into his cave. Paintings of kangaroos and koalas were done with just dots, dots, dots everywhere. Bob showed them to a pile of twigs and they lay down. Jessica fell asleep instantly, but Jake lay awake. It soon grew dark and Jake was waiting for sleep to come - but it didn't. He listened to the chirping of the cicadas outside the cave hole....

“Let's battle through sand, heat and flocks,” a voice said waking them up. “What flocks?” Jessica and Jake asked together as they got up. But Bob tapped the side of his nose and led the way towards the jewel and the flock of something.... They trudged through deep hot sand, only catching glimpses of geckos coming out of their shady spots to get some rays but dashing back in as they heard the humans trooping by (they were walking because the aboriginal couldn't fly). It was tiring and they were thirsty, but without complaining, they pushed themselves on. Lots of trees appeared either side of them. The shadows looked so inviting. So Jessica and Jake started making their way towards the shade, but were pulled back instantly by Bob.

“But...” Jake started.

“We mustn't stop here,” he replied, shortly.

Jessica looked and in the branches, a pair of eyes looked back at her. She was taken aback, so she closed her eyes and shook herself and when she opened them again, the eyes were gone. They kept walking until Uluru became visible. So they walked until they were meters from it. It looked so magnificent with the blue cloudless sky behind and the yellow kangaroo sign on the dusty road.

“Look!” Jake exclaimed. “There's a glint on top of Uluru. It must be the jewel.”

“Let's go!” Jessica said excitedly.

“WAIT,” the aboriginal said warningly. “You do want to stop Powell, don't you?”

“Of course,” they replied confused.

“Well, he gains a power when you do, because you stole the necklace without his permission. The necklace wants to get back to him. So prepare to get bitten,” he said, taking a deep breath.

They all took a step forward and from the trees around them zillions and zillions of sabre-toothed flies zoomed out and lined themselves up, guarding the rock. They were surrounded by monsters – they were defiantly flies, with big black eyes and huge yellow sabre-teeth, glaring menacingly at them, their grey bodies were furry and their light purple wings glistened in the hot sun, like they were saying: *do not come any closer or prepare to be bitten*. Jake and Jessica took a deep breath and they stepped forward, ZOOOOOM the flies whizzed in and out of each other. Darting towards the wide eyed humans, Cocky collided with the flock of flies and started to gobble up as many as possible. Jake started fly swatting.

“Nice Aussie Salute!” called Bob. He copied Jake and clapped his hand, flattening the flies and they fell to the ground and disintegrated. Lots of fly swatting, hand clapping and

fly chopping later, there were no flies left. They all dashed forward to the bottom of the rock and started to climb and climb and suddenly reached the top, but the aborigine fell behind.

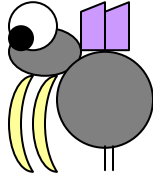
“Wait!” Jake called to Jessica.

“No,” Bob said. “I have been bitten by a Red Back Spider, the most deadly spider in Australia. Cocky will guide you the last few steps. Good luck my friends...” his voice fell rapidly throughout this speech. He lowered his head and fell silent. Cocky chirped a sad chirp and led the two to the top. Briskly they strode forward and Jessica, panting a little, picked up the glittering jewel. It was a light pink with white swirls.

“An opal,” Jake said. “It fits the second hole.”

“Bye, Cocky,” Jessica said. “Go on, you’re free now.”

They watched as the cockatoo flew into the distance and they inserted the opal into the hole. Their surroundings swirled again to inky blackness.



Chapter 3

Peril in Prague

Jessica and Jake landed on their feet in the grass.

“It’s happened again. Do you think we’ve changed country again? I wonder where we are now?” said Jessica, looking around.

“Hm...look there’s a guy coming. Maybe he’ll help,” answered Jake.

“Well, be careful. Bob warned us that it won’t be easy to get the stones. We can’t trust anyone.”

“*Co jsi myslyte ze delate!!!*” shouted the guy.

“Err...hello? Can we please know where we are?” asked Jake.

“Ah...English? Well, there’s one thing I know and that is you found the right guy because lots of Czech people would not understand you. Anyway you are in Czech Republic in Prague of course! How could you not know where you are?” asked the man, when the kids let out a breath of relief.

“We...well... You wouldn’t believe us anyway. Could you please tell us where we can find something...special?” asked Jake, trying not to give away anything.

“Yes, yes. If it is something special then it should be something in the National Museum,” said the man, while pointing to a huge building. The building was brownish-gold and had a green roof.

“Thank you,” said Jessica ignoring the people who were staring at them because they were standing on the perfectly cut grass.

“Do you really think that the National Museum is the right place?” asked Jake. “Well, look at the necklace,” said Jessica.

“Oh, of course.” Jake pulled the necklace out of his pocket. The pair peered at it. They could see that the engravings were visible once again but this time the message was different:

*To find the jewel you do seek,
A range of creatures you shall meet.
Search around Wenceslas square
The exhibits are alive – beware!*

“Exhibits? That must be the museum then.” Jake and Jessica ran off, not even noticing the statue of a man on a horse. The houses there that they passed were huge. Most of them were restaurants and apartments. They were all old fashioned and the restaurants looked very nice, mostly because Jake and Jessica were starving.

When they came up to the museum they both looked at each other and nodded. They pushed the big heavy doors open.

“I’m happy we are finally here. Now where should we look?” asked Jake.

“We should have a look in the rock section,” said Jessica.

“Yeah. Wait - how do you know they have a rock section?” asked Jake.

“It says right here.”

“Oh right.”

They both sprinted off to the rock section. They passed the gift shop, which was on their right, then they took a hard turn left and there it was. Luckily nobody was there. Then they saw a ruby red stone. Unfortunately, it was surrounded by flames.

“Oh great. Now what do we do? Our power?” asked Jake.

“Do you even know what our power is?” asked Jessica. But Jake was already coming forward to the flames.

“Jake! What do you think you’re doing?!” asked Jessica with a shout.

“Trying something...Fire! Stop!” shouted Jake and as if by magic, the flames slowly went away.

“Heh heh...” said Jake with a grin. But Jessica just grabbed the ruby, her eyes sparkling.

“This is soooooooooo pretty!” she said. But her daydreaming was interrupted by a loud roar.

“What was that?” asked Jake. Before Jessica could answer, the large door was opened by a whole load of stuffed animals. There was only one problem...instead of the animals being little and cute, they were real, except that they were stuffed. There were bears, foxes, rabbits, tigers, lions, antelopes, deer...and was that a polar bear?

“You didn’t know there was an animal section?” asked Jake while looking a bit shocked.

“Err...I didn’t have time to check and I didn’t think that they were gonna attack us!” said Jessica with a hint of annoyance.

“Well, I think they probably didn’t come for tea!” argued Jake.

But the animals weren’t going to stay there and wait for the argument to end, so they started running towards the kids.

“FIRE!!! ATTACK!” shouted both of the kids.

Most of the animals were burnt to ashes, except for the mice.

“Shoo!” said Jessica, and the mice just ran away.

“That was a bit easy,” said Jessica brushing her hands as if she just cleaned a room.

“Wait a second... where’s the stone?” asked Jake.

“I don’t know...” answered Jessica while searching. They both looked around and after a few minutes of panic they found it just lying on the ground.

“Phew...” said Jake. But then there was an incredibly loud screech – well, not a real screech, more like a moan.

“Don’t tell me there’s a whale,” said Jake with a groan.

“Unfortunately there is...but just a skeleton!” said Jessica.

“Put the stone in!! NOW!!!!” shouted Jake.

Jessica put the stone quickly into the necklace.

“Hold on!” shouted Jessica. The room swirled around Jessica and Jake into inky blackness.

Chapter 4

Trouble at the Beach

There was another bump and the two teenagers tumbled on to a heap of sand.
“Where are we now?” said Jessica.
“I don’t know,” answered Jake.
The necklace glowed and gave them the answer.

*To find the jewel you do seek,
A range of creatures you shall meet,
The island’s heart in ocean blue
There comes a fish and seaweed too..*

“Look at this place!” said Jake, speechless. “What a wonderful beach. The water is transparent.”
“Wow!” said Jessica. “The palm trees are so tall.”
“Stop day dreaming. We need to get going and hurry up. We need help to find the Heart of the Island.”
“There is a man. Come on, let’s go and ask for help.”
“Hello, sir. Do you think you can help us get to the heart of the island?” asked Jake.
“Ohhhh, yes you have come to the right person,” answered the man. “First what you need to do is go right after you see that big palm tree. Then you need to walk right into the middle of the palm tree forest. After that you’re going to see a place that says *The Luxury Restaurant*. Next walk left until you see a small island that is the size of a room and it’s in the middle of the beach. OOOH and I almost forgot something: be careful getting there - no one has ever come out alive from that Island.”
Jessica gasped with a shiver down her spine.
“And no one knows why.”
“Thanks for the information,” said Jake in a kindly voice.
“Bye,” said the man. “I need to get going.”
“Yeah, we do too.”

After that, Jake and Jessica tried to find the Island with the directions the man gave them but they were just leading off to nowhere. Eventually, they reached a wooden building surrounded by trees. People were sitting outside on the terrace at tables, eating and drinking.
“Hey, look over there! The luxury restaurant!”
“Ahhh, this smells nice,” murmured Jessica. “It’s grilled meat, right?”
“I think so,” answered Jake.
Both of them stopped and gazed at each other.
“Should we, Jake?”
“I am feeling kind of hungry,” answered Jake.
“Me too.”
“OK. Let’s go. I invite you.”
“Finally someone is acting like a gentlemen,” murmured Jessica in a soft voice.
“What did you say Jessica?”

“Oh, nothing,” replied Jessica.

Jake and Jessica strode to the restaurant.

“This food is the best we have tasted in days,” said Jessica.

“I know.” After the delicious food, Jake and Jessica kept on going with their mission. After an hour just wondering around, they finally saw the Island where they were suppose to get the jewel from.

“How are we going to get there?” asked Jessica.

“Swimming. Use your common sense.”

“Do you really think we have to?”

“Why? Are you scared?”

“Don’t be stupid. You know I am in the Rheinbach swimming team.”

“Come on. Let’s get going.”

“Are we going to swim in our clothes?”

“Why not?” answered Jake.

“I’ll go in the water first to see if it’s cold,” said Jessica. She gingerly put a toe into the crystal clear water. “Ohhhhhhhh. This water is cold!” she said, shivering.

“Come on Jessica,” replied Jake. It’s not that cold. Get in!”

Jake and Jessica swam a long distance.

“I am getting tired,” said Jake, after a while.

“Me too.”

Suddenly, Jessica screamed loudly. “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

“What’s wrong?” cried Jake.

“Something bit me!”

“OK, hold on Jess”.

“It hurts! Hurry up!”

“I am trying to. Stay calm, ok? Let me check what it is.” He put his head under the water, squinting to see what was happening.

“Wow! A star fish is on your leg and it has needles that are stuck in your skin! It’s a monster. I’ve never seen such a big one.”

“Really?” said Jessica in pain. “Get it out! What are you waiting for, dumbo?”

“Ahhh! It bit me,” said Jake, “but I got it off. Don’t worry. Keep on swimming three meters to get to the Island; it’s right in front of you. Don’t give up! Hang in there! We’re finally here.”

“I know,” answered Jessica, collapsing on to the beach.

“Wow, Jess, you’re losing a lot of blood.”

“I know,” said Jessica.

“Wait, hang in there. I have a plaster somewhere. I found it. Here, put it on,” said Jake.

“Now where is the jewel?”

“Let’s look for it. Come on,” said Jessica.

“Are you sure you can manage walking?”

“Yeah I am feeling better,” answered Jessica.

They started to hunt around in the vegetation. Then Jake glimpsed something shining at the bottom of a tall pine tree.

“There it is!”

“Oh yeah. Come on, what are we waiting for?”

“Careful - it might be a trap.”

“I know what I am doing, don’t you think.” Jessica reached down and carefully picked up the sparkling diamond.

“I’ve got it,” she breathed. “Isn’t it beautiful?”

“Put it in and let’s get out of here.” Jessica inserted the jewel into the next empty space in the necklace and the island turned into complete blackness as they were transported to another place.

Chapter 5

From the Bush to the City

“Where are we now?” asked Jake. They saw a big board which on it said Disavow West Park, Kenya.

“What’s that noise?” asked Jessica.

“I think it’s an Elephant running!” Boom!

“We have a big problem,” replied Jessica.

“Why?” asked Jake.

“It’s because the game ranger’s dog has found us,” said Jessica. “Look, there is a truck there.” If only we could get past the guards, she thought. “Oh!!! No! One of the guards is coming this way!”

The guard came toward them. The children tried to hide themselves but there was no place for hiding so they had to stay still. The guard came past them.

“Cool, the guard never saw us,” said Jake. “I think this is our power. Let’s go to the truck quickly.”

Jake started the engine. The park ranger heard the noise of the truck.

“Oh!!! No! The truck is gone,” said one of the guards. “*Enda uka ambie mkuu wa polisi kwanba kuna watoto wame jukua gari yetu.*” They started running after the car but the road was too dusty so they could not see anything in front.

As Jake and Jessica drove down the dusty road they saw some wild animals: tall giraffes eating leaves on top of trees; elephants eating grass; lions chasing zebras; and hyenas waiting for the lion to finish eating so that they may eat the bones. When they were sure they were safe they took out the necklace. They looked at the writing and it said:

*To find the jewels that you seek
A range of creatures you must meet
Search up upon the Tower of Time
The water horse will cause the crime.*

As they were driving, they saw a tall man wearing earrings all over his tongue¹. They asked the Maasai,

“Do you know which direction is Nairobi?” The Maasai said,

“*Uki enda ivi Kusini uta ji pata Nairobi.*”

“What did he say?” asked Jessica.

“I think he is saying we should go to the north,” said Jake. Jake and Jessica thanked the Maasai. Moo! Moo!

“What’s that?” stammered Jessica.

“Those are my cows,” answered the Maasai. “I also have sheep and goats. Before reaching the Time Tower, you will have to cross a huge river but I think at the side of the river you will find a water boat but be careful because there are lots of hippopotamus which are surrounding the river and they have the power to control water.”

¹ He was a Maasai (black)

² Afrikaans languages

“We have to go the Time Tower or else it will be locked and we would have to sleep outside,” said Jake. They arrived at the river. Jake had no idea how to go past the hippopotamus.

“I think I have an idea,” said Jessica.

“What is your idea?” asked Jake.

“The idea is that, we should use our invisibility power to pass the Hippopotamus and then we should swim across the river without moving the water or make any noise”. They tried the idea. It worked and they swam gently across the river. The Hippopotamus could smell them but they could not see them. When they saw a ship which was near them they asked for a ride. The ship driver asked Jake and Jessica where they were going. Jake said that they were going to the Time Tower.

“I will drop you at the bridge and you will have to walk for about twelve meters then you will have to turn left and you will find the train station. Now from there you will have to help yourself,” said the ship driver.

When they reached the train station, they asked where the Time Tower was. One of the people said the Time Tower is where the train finishes and changes direction.

“Thank you,” said Jake and Jessica kindly.

When the train reached the stop they came out excited.

“Hurrah we have reached the Time Tower!” said both of them. “First we have to get across those guards on the door. We should use our invisible power.” They passed through the guards without making any noise. They reached a place where they had to show a pass card so they went back to the guards. Then Jack took one of guards’ pass cards and Jake went back to Jessica. They showed the pass card to the door then door opened.

They hurried up the stairs and soon they reached the top of the roof. On the necklace it was written: *You should place the Gold Diamond on the ninth hole.*

“Hurrah, it’s now only a few more stones remaining, so that we might see if Simon Powell was correct or wrong.” They placed the Diamond into the hole and once again, blackness swirled around them.

Chapter 6

Going to Italy

BAM.... "Ouch! That hurt!" exclaimed Jake while trying to search for Jessica.

"Jessica?! Jessica, where are you?!"

"I'm right here!" Jessica yelled back.

"Where here!?" shouted Jake madly, while trying to look around him.

"Under you!"

"Under me?" Jake asked, a bit frightened.

"Yes! Under you!" she replied with a lot of anger.

"Oh no! I'm slipping! Heeeeeeeeeelp!"

Then, all of a sudden, Jessica heard a huge crash behind her and turned around with a big shock.

"I was on A PALM TREE! No wonder my back hurts, and it was so spiky up there!" said Jake in astonishment.

"YES. You were on a palm tree! Now can we please move on! I've been waiting very long to find out what we need to do to get this rock that's hidden somewhere but we don't know where. Why did we even put that rock in the necklace in the first place? I'm beginning to get fed up with this," said Jessica.

"Oh come on. If we didn't put the rock in the necklace, he would have taken over the world and become immortal and who knows what disasters he would have made," Jake said.

"I think were in Italy. Don't you?" said Jessica.

"I don't know I can't tell," said Jake, trying hard to figure out what country they were in.

"Yes. Yes, this is Italy all right. Can't you tell? They're saying '*Grazie*' and '*Perfavore*' and '*Si*'. This is definitely Italy," Jessica said while walking in the direction of a bridge.

"Really?" Jake said to himself as Jessica wandered off into the distance. He started to run past a lot of houses that were all attached to each other and past some tall buildings so he could catch up with Jessica.

"Hey wait up!" Finally after walking for about 5 minutes they finally reached the bridge.

When they got there they started to stare down all the way to the bottom where there was a bit of land and a little tiny river where ducks and swans lay to feed their little chicks.

"Oh, well that's a really cute idea," said Jessica very sweetly and kindly.

"Oh my gosh, you're so girlish!" said Jake getting bored.

"I am a Girl. Anyway, moving on." Jake and Jessica started walking towards a big building which said hotel on top of it. Suddenly a loud noise started to emerge in the distance.

"What's that noise?" said Jessica in suspicion. "I hope it's not those flies again." Then it came even closer until it was right behind them. They both turned around together and started to laugh at each other because it was just a fast train passing by.

"Ok. I guess we can keep walking." said Jake with a smile and a little laugh. They both started to walk past cars, busses and trucks, when suddenly they suddenly remembered to

look at the message on the necklace. Jessica took the necklace off and started to read what was written on top of the necklace.

*To find the jewel you do seek
A range of creatures you shall meet.
Your powers form once in the ocean
But sea creatures cause a commotion.*

“Creatures again. Oh, this stinks.” said Jessica.
“Tell me about it. I think I just stepped on a dog poop. Wait a second let me see. Oh, yeah I did step on a dog poop, and it really stinks too.” said Jake with a frown.
“I’m not talking about the stupid poop on your shoe. I’m talking about our enemy that we’re going to have. Pooh! It does really stink though, you’re right.” said Jessica.
“Anyway ignoring the gross poop on your shoe,” she continued, trying not to throw up, “we’d better start to go to the beach before it’s too late.”
“Too late for what?”
“I have no idea. I just felt like saying that. Let’s go!” said Jessica in a hero voice.
“Wait! But which way’s the beach?” asked Jake. They both started to scan the area of where they were. Passing car after car, bus after bus, truck after truck, Jessica finally spotted the beach after two other bridges. Jessica started to run as Jake still scanned. He turned around to tell Jessica he couldn’t find anything but soon as he realized he was talking to nothing but a tree. He looked around and saw that Jessica was running in the direction of the building that said Hotel on it. He jumped up and started to run after her. Past road crossings, past houses, past shops, and past people they finally reached the hotel. They went to the back of the hotel and saw a swimming pool.
“That’s not what I call sea!” said Jake with anger.
“But this is!” said Jessica with a happy smile. They both started to walk along the beach and saw hundreds of people lying on sunbathing beds or going to bars to get something to drink with their swimming suits on.

“Oh my gosh! I love the beach! It’s just so relaxing,” said Jessica smiling while walking. They kept on walking with happy faces until they encountered an Italian who wanted to sell necklaces and also earrings. They both stopped and asked in English what he wanted and the man was confused and just started to walk away from them as if they were creepy monsters.
“What’s the matter with him?” asked Jake.
“We’re foreigners and he didn’t understand us, so that’s what’s wrong with him. Duh! Plus, most people here seem to be Italian. I don’t think there are so many foreigners here. They usually go to bigger places to tan and also to have more fun,” said Jessica with a smarty pants voice.
“Well it still doesn’t make any sense to me,” said Jake in a stubborn tone. They just both kept on walking along the seaside and they soon found a little ladder that lead to a big piece of water.
“Let’s get in from here.” said Jessica.
“Ok. But wait we don’t have any swimming suits,” said Jake suddenly, while grabbing her from the arm.

“Well, it wasn’t a problem in Honduras. Anyway, don’t you remember our power would be revealed when we touch water?” said Jessica, annoyed. “Maybe we magically get swimming suits!”

“Oh yeah. I remember now,” said Jake. They both started to walk towards the ladder when they saw two jellyfish blocking their way. They just ignored the jellyfish and touched the water. They both looked at each other and started to laugh.

“You look so funny!” said Jessica with a laugh.

“You too.” They had turned into colourful fish.

“Come on, let’s go find the opal.”

They both started to swim towards a big blue and green coral. When they got there, they looked for something shiny and oval. They started to do what they did to search for the beach. Scan. They started to look under the coral, over the coral, between the coral, even inside the coral, but nothing.

“I give up! We’ll never find that stupid opal!” said Jake lying on the sea bed.

“Yes, we will. Come on, have some confidence in yourself,” said Jessica in return. She was also tired of searching but she didn’t give up. After scanning fish after coral after rocks, Jessica said,

“Wait. What’s that?” Jake looked where Jessica was staring.

“It’s the opal! Finally!” Jake said with relief. They both started to swim towards the opal with happy smiles on their faces, until, all of a sudden a huge shark came out in surprise and they both screamed. In a panic, Jessica said,

“OK. Jake, I’ll distract this big monster, while you try to get the opal!”

“OK. But wait a second, where’s the necklace?”

“Don’t worry, it is safe. I left it on one of those big rocks where the ladder was!”

“Ok!” So Jake started to swim towards the opal, while Jessica same as fast and as far as she could from Jake. Jake scurried as fast as possible too and he was so close when he heard the noise of crabs coming his way. He looked around and saw five crabs coming towards him. He sprinted even faster to get there before the crabs could and SNAP he got the opal before the crabs could even reach for it. Meanwhile Jessica was trying to distract the shark, when she saw Jake coming her way. So she started to head for the ladder as fast as she could before the shark could rip her into bits. Jake saw she was also running for the ladder so he caught up with her and the shark was still about 3 metres away so they had enough time to get out of the water. So they finally reached the ladder and they got out and were back to normal again. The most amazing thing though was that they weren’t even a bit wet even though they had stayed in the water for more than 45 minutes.

“OK, get the necklace so we can put in this rock,” said Jake panting. Jessica got the necklace and Jake put the opal inside the hole that looked like an oval and then Jessica held on tight while the whole place started to swirl once again into an inky blackness.

Chapter 7

Trouble in the Himalayas

"Where are we now?" asked Jessica.

"I don't know. Hey, what's that white and red building?" asked Jake.

It was a red and white building with some sort of mythical creatures protecting it and covered with loads of prayer flags and some kind of a wheel which you could push and walk around it.

"Hey, let's go check it out!" exclaimed Jessica. So they went up to the building and near the building there was a sign board and it said Changangkha Lakhang and below translated in English it said Changangkha Monastery.

"Hey, by the way, what's our power?" asked Jessica.

When they reached the monastery they were exhausted but both of them were astonished by their beautiful clothes. Then suddenly Jake remembered this place. He remembered this place was called Thimphu, The capital city of Bhutan. He remembered this place from the most boring subject of all time for him, History.

"Quick, look at the necklace. Where do we have to go?"

The inscription on the necklace glowed brightly with the words:

*To find the jewel you do seek
A range of creatures you must meet.
Find Umze and the Buddha's head
Or the Jachung will find you instead.*

"Weird," said Jessica. "What does it mean? An Umze and a Jachung?"

"Well, the Umze is one of the chief monks of the monastery," replied Jake, "but I've never heard of a Jachung."

Then, suddenly, a kind-looking girl went to them and said,

"Acho, ashim¹. Where are your *Gho* and *Kira*²?"

They were surprised that she spoke a different language but still they could understand the language. Then Jake said,

"We are from a far place called Germany and we came here for holiday. Can you take us to the Umze³ of this place?" So the little girl took them to the Umze.

So they went to the Umze and told them about Simon Powell's evil Plan. They thought the Umze wouldn't know what they were saying but surprisingly the Umze had the same vision.

"The jewel in Bhutan is called the Jewel of Heroes. It was worn by all the heroes of Bhutan. The jewel is on the head of the Buddha Statue but beware of the Jachung. It can kill you if you let your guard down. Take this *Sungkea*⁴. It will protect you from evil spirits if you kill the Jachung. Farewell." The Umze walked away, leaving the children standing alone.

¹ *acho*: big brother *ashim*: big sister

² *Gho*: men's national dress. *Kira*: women's national dress.

³ *Umze*: head chief of the monks monastery.

⁴ *Sungkea*: a religious piece of string worn around the neck like a necklace.

“Great. Another creature to fight. Why did we ever start on this? And what *is* a Jachung anyway?” said Jessica.

“Stop moaning and come on,” said Jake.

So they went down the footpath. Nearly at the end they saw in front of them a forest of stinging nettles and on the right they saw a bridge and under that it was a huge drain and after that a taxi stand. So they told the driver their destination and after a while they were dropped at the gate of the Buddha statue and then they walked up the road and reached the statue. Then Jessica said,

"Oh man. This statue is BIG. How are we supposed to get up there?"

"Stop being negative," said Jake angrily.

Then suddenly there was a big fog and they were swooped up from the ground and when they exited out from the fog, they saw it was a dragon.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" shouted both of them. Then magically they heard the dragon say,

"I will help you slay the Jachung." So then, Jake suddenly found himself equipped with a sword and shield and Jessica with a bow and arrow. Then they saw the Jachung. It had a human body, a bird's head and bird's leg and a snake coming through its mouth. So the Jachung came with full speed and attacked Jake but he blocked the attack with the shield and Jake with lots of courage and determination killed the Jachung.

Then Jake snatched the crystal from the head of the Buddha and pushed it in to the necklace and suddenly, the surroundings swirled into an inky blackness.

"Quick hold on!" he shouted to Jessica, as the surroundings dissolved around them.

Chapter 8

Double Trouble

"Ow!" said Jessica as she got up from the hard landing. "Let's see what the necklace says this time."

"Okay."

Jake looked at the necklace to see what it said.

*To find the jewel that you do seek
A range of creatures you shall meet
The building's peak where you hear Scouse
Holds two special birds to boss you about.*

What could that mean?"

"I'm no whiz at Geography but don't people in England Scouse!?" Jessica answered.

"Yeah, but England has loads of accents. Scouse is only one of them." They looked around.

"We are in Liverpool," said John.

"How do you know that?"

"It says so on that sign for the hotel over there."

"Okay, now we know where we are, let's see if we can find the gem!" exclaimed Jessica.

"You've forgotten something!"

"What?"

"In every country we have been to so far we've got a different power. I've also noticed that we never keep the power."

"So? Are you saying that we should have a new power?"

"Yes."

"Well genius, you're not the only one who has noticed things. I've noticed the power never comes until we need it."

"Okay, you have a point. Let's go and ask that man over there if he has heard of this building with two birds."

John started to walk towards the man when he heard Jessica shout to him,

"We don't need to."

He looked in her direction and saw a tall, brownish building. He followed the windows up and gasped at two things. The first thing he gasped at was the two tall birds on the roof and the second was that he saw a glittering red light on the roof.

"Do you think that's the gem?" he asked.

"Probably, but how do we get up there?"

"Let's go inside and see if there are tours or maybe we'll be able to walk to the top."

They strode towards the building, dodging cars driving at ridiculous speeds. Finally they reached their destination, the big building. The two teenagers walked inside. A lady at the reception desk noticed them.

" 'Ave ye booked a tour?" the lady said. She wore a red outfit and spoke with a weird accent, which they presumed was Scouse.

"Em, no not really, we thought they were free to all," they answered.

"Sorry, but no. Ye 'ave to book in advance," the lady said.

"Okay."

"Sorry."

They walked back outside.

"That was useless. What do we do now?" asked Jake.

"I don't know."

"We could try to climb it. There seems to be a lot of ridges."

"No, it's too dangerous. Anyway I was thinking maybe there is more than one building with two birds on its peak. That light before might have been exactly that. A light."

"Let's not give up on this building yet. Let's go back inside and ask for some information. That's what the riddle said to do."

They went back inside and took a leaflet. Jake read it aloud:

"...this display of two liver birds showed the idea that the liver bird was a mythical bird that once haunted the local shoreline. According to popular legend, they are a male and female pair, the female looking out to sea, watching for the sailors to return safely home, while the male looks towards the city, making sure the pubs are open. Another legend says that the birds face away from each other because if they were to mate and fly away, the city wouldn't exist. In fact, they were designed to watch the City and the Sea..."

This sounds like the right place."

"Yes but again, how do we get up?"

"Like you said, climb."

They went back outside and walked to one of the building's many sides.

"I'll go first," said Jake.

"Ok, be careful."

Jake studied the wall then, for some unknown reason jumped. Two amazing things happened at once. The first was that Jake had jumped half way up the building and the second but unknown to Jake and Jessica was that one of the birds flapped its wings and flew down to the main part of the roof.

"Wow!!!! I just found our way to the top. Come on, you can also do it. It's not scary."

Jessica walked up to the wall like Jake did and also jumped. She closed her eyes expecting a cold blast of air but nothing happened. She opened her eyes.

"I... II didn't move."

"Try again."

She tried again but still didn't go anywhere. Meanwhile the other bird had risen from its perch.

"It's ok. I'll wait down here. You go and get the gem; I'll be fine. If there is a problem I'll phone you."

Jake looked dissatisfied but decided not to argue for Jessica always won. He jumped to the next ledge then the next. When he reached the flat part of the roof top he was breathless. All of a sudden his phone rang.

Jessica didn't know what to do. Was it her eyesight tricking her? It had happened before. Surely she couldn't be seeing things as they were! Rock birds don't just jump off their

ledge everyday. She reached for her bag where she put her phone but nothing was there. Where was it? She looked behind her and was relieved to see her bag on a bench. She ran towards it and picked it up. Where was her phone? Ahh found it. Jessica quickly dialled Jake's number and pressed the call button.

"Hello?" Jake said into the phone.

"Look behind you. Turn nice and slowly and please don't scream."

"Oookay," a puzzled Jake turned and understood why Jessica had said not to scream. The birds that had been on the peaks of the building had risen and flew towards him. If Jessica hadn't told him to turn he would have been bird meat. Suddenly Jake had everything a sculptor needed by his feet.

"What should I do with these?" Jake said into his phone.

"Threaten the birds with the hammer and chisel. Only use them if you have too - remember these are part of a national treasure." The line went dead.

"H...hello little birdies I am just g...going to go over there and get the l...l...lovely little g...gem and then I will go," Jake said to the birds.

"No, I want you to go away now not later, this is my property, this. You have no right to be 'ere," said a rough male voice that seemed to come from the first bird's mouth. Jake would have fainted if it wasn't for the sheer drop behind him.

"Leave him alone, don't worry we won't hurt you," said a gentle, soothing, female voice which came from the second bird's mouth. Both the birds had the same accent as the woman inside the building. "What's your name?"

"Help!"

"What a nice name, Help," said the second bird.

"Here's the deal. You retrieve the gem and give us the necklace and we'll give you and your friend a safe flight home," said the first bird.

"Never!"

"Its ok, we know you didn't ask for two big, stone, man-eating birds to stop you at this point. You'd rather have some annoying flies like in Australia," said the female.

"How did you know about Australia?"

"We know everything from your first word to how you will die to your embarrassing little crush on -" the male bird stopped half way through his sentence because Jake had picked up a hammer and chisel and he was in a throwing position. All of a sudden a loud shrill scream was heard. Jessica...

Jessica paced the street. Why did those stupid birds have to appear? She had to help. She walked up to the building wall deciding she might as well try that jumping thing again. Jessica jumped up into the air imagining herself floating over the world. A cold blast of air got at her cheeks and she closed her eyes. When the cold blast ended she opened her eyes to find herself looking at a brick wall. She looked down and saw that her feet were on a thin window ledge. Jessica grabbed out for something to hold on to but there was nothing there. She fell plummeting towards the street's hard concrete floor. Hoping that some one would hear her death cry she let out the loudest scream possible. Suddenly she wasn't falling but gaining height. Jessica opened her eyes to see a big, stone bird's head in front of her. She was on the back of one of the stone birds. In two minutes

she was getting off the bird who had landed on the flat part of the roof. As soon as she was off she collapsed onto the floor.

Jake ran to the edge of the roof. He looked down to see Jessica fall. Desperate for help he shouted out. Looking around him he realised there was no one around. To his right was a river and to his left was the city. Suddenly he had a mad and dangerous idea. The river was quite far away from where he was standing but if he could make it to the second bird's perch he might be close enough to put his plan into action.

"Plan time," Jake whispered to himself. He ran about a meter to the right and the male bird made a kind of growling noise. He ran another two meters and it was becoming clear that these birds were very fast walkers.

"Stop this, boy. No matter how far you run we will always catch up."

"Your right. I'll stop running. Just tell me one thing. Are you working for Simon Powell?"

"Not working, no, no, no, helping. He awoke us. He woke us up so we could do our job. That's protecting the City and Sea. We owed him a favour. He asked us to get a special necklace and gem. The gem is over there. The problem is that we can't get it. It would incinerate us. Stone birds and shiny gems don't get along. That's why we asked you to get it. He told us that two teenagers would come to this building and try to get the gem and that we must stop them and get the necklace from them," answered the first bird. Jake looked behind him and saw that in the time he had been talking to the birds, Jessica had fallen further than expected. Time for step two: The Deal.

"I also have a deal to make. You go down there and save Jessica, who is at this moment falling towards her death, or I'll throw the necklace into the sea," said Jake with a smirk.

"You couldn't throw the necklace into the river from here, you silly little boy," said the first bird, who was looking into the sky, probably trying to figure out which way the wind was going. The second bird was doing the same.

"No but I can throw it from here," said Jake the birds looked down and saw that in the time they had been looking up into the sky he had got to the second bird's perch.

"YOU'RE ON MY PERCH!!!! NO ONE GOES THERE! I'll go and get your friend as long as afterwards you get the gem and give us the necklace and NEVER go on my perch again," said the second bird.

"Deal," said Jake as the bird dived down towards the falling girl. Silence. In three minutes the bird was back with an astounded Jessica on its back.

"Now, get off the perch and give me the necklace," said the first bird. Jake jumped off the perch and ran to Jessica. He helped her off and she collapsed on the floor.

"Wake up," said Jake.

"Huh?"

"Oh good you're awake."

"Gem and necklace boy, the gem and necklace," said one of the birds.

"What did you promise them, Jake?" asked Jessica with a stern tone of voice.

"Come on," said Jake. "Can I have the necklace?"

"Sure, just don't do something stupid." Jake helped Jessica to her feet and she gave him the necklace. They walked over to the gem and picked it up.

"It's been nice doing business with you" said Jake with a smile as he slotted the gem into

the next empty slot on the necklace. The surroundings swirled into an inky blackness and Jessica grabbed on to Jake's arm as they moved on into their next adventure.

Chapter 9

Snow in Sweden

“Where are we?”

“Dunno but its real cooold!”

“Yes, brrrrr!”

Alex and Jake started walking down the street. Big heaps of gravelled snow were piled by the road.

“Should we ask someone where we are?”

“No need, the sign there says Stockholm Centrum 2 km.”

“Ah, we’re in Sweden. I wonder where we have to go.”

“Look at the necklace. What does it say?” Jessica took out the necklace and again there was a glowing inscription on it:

To find the jewel that you do seek

A range of creatures you shall meet.

The capital’s the place to be

The beast of snow may soon freeze thee.

We’re probably meant to go to the centre, don’t you think?”

“Yes, Stockholm is the capital, isn’t it?”

“Yeah.”

“No wonder it’s cold. What was that about a beast of snow?”

“Don’t start worrying yet. What are our new powers?”

“It feels like snow is in my mind...”

“Same here.”

The two teenagers walked quietly for about ten minutes, and then they heard a car.

The car stopped and opened a window. The woman who was driving said,

“*Vad gör ni här?*”¹

“Excuse me, can you speak English?” asked Jake.

“Yes of course but what are you doing here?”

“We are trying to get to the centre of Stockholm.”

“You are walking the wrong way. Hop in the car and I will take you to the centre.”

Jake said,

“No, thank you,” while Alex said,

“Yes please”. They looked at each other, half amused and half irritated.

“We need to get there fast,” said Alex.

“Yes, but it might be a trap.”

“C’mon, don’t be such a wimp. Hop in!”

“Not a chance, I do not...”

“Do you want to go in my car or not?!” asked the woman, looking a bit irritated now.

“Let’s go in the car!”

“NO!” screamed Jake.

¹ “What are you doing here?” in Swedish.

Alex gave him a last irritated look and climbed into the car which went along the road, round a corner and disappeared. First he started to run but then he realized there was no point. He stood paralyzed for a minute or two while the horrible fact sank into his brain; she had left him. He was alone in the capital of Sweden, alone... alone... alone...

He walked on, sad at first but then he started to get angry. When he got angry he started to walk faster and faster and suddenly he was in the centre of Stockholm.
“Now where should I go?” he asked himself.

The car came to a traffic circle where one way went to Stockholm Centrum and the other to Solna. Alex got a real shock when the car went to left, to Solna.
“W-w-where...where a-are y-youu g-going?” Alex asked.
“Hahahaa! Your little boyfriend was right, this is a trap. Now give me the necklace.”
“I don’t have it! Jake has it.”
“Well, we’ll just have to get him to bring it to us then, won’t we?”
Alex got dizzy, the car started to spin. Suddenly she fainted.

Jake stood still thinking about what he should do when he saw a little paper on the ground. He picked it up and read:

IF JAKE SMITH READS THIS YOU ARE HEREBY INFORMED THAT ALEX JONSTEN HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED BY SIMON POWELL.
YOUR ORDERS (IF YOU WANT TO SEE ALEX AGAIN):
COME TO MASTER SIMONS VÄG(WAY) 18 TOMORROW (THE BUS GOES TO RITORP) 14TH OF JUNE 16:30.
BRING THE NECKLACE!!!

Jake set off directly. He must get somewhere to sleep. He walked for something that could have been minutes, hours or seconds through the snowy city. Suddenly, he stopped and retraced his steps. There was the globe! The jewel must be here somewhere. He walked around the globe and saw a ladder. He climbed up it. He climbed and climbed and climbed, and suddenly he was at the top. There was a box at the absolute top. When Jake walked to it and opened it, he saw a bright white jewel. He picked it up but as he turned he slipped and fell. He fell and fell and fell, until suddenly he splashed on to the ground. It hurt like h**l but he had it! He took out the necklace. But now what should he do? Continue with the search for the missing jewels? Time was important and this time it looked like he was ahead of the monsters. But what about Jessica? He couldn’t just leave her. He made up his mind and slipped the necklace into one pocket and the jewel into the other. He stopped, looked around and saw a hotel.
“One night?” said the woman receptionist. “That’s 200 kr.”
“Ok and how many euros is that?”
“About 20.”
“There you go.”

Jake didn't sleep very well that night; he was wondering what Simon Powell was doing to Jessica.

Jessica woke up next morning. Her plan was to sneak out of the apartment; it wasn't a good plan but it was her best. She doubted that Jake would come and rescue her after their argument, and anyway how would he know where she was?

"Bunzaai!!!" She ran against the door – it wasn't locked. She went out, happy to be free.

"Thought you were smarter than me?" Out in the garden stood the woman, laughing. She took a hard grip on Jessica's neck and led her back into the house.

In the morning Jake took a bus to Ritorp where he started looking for Mäster Simons väg 18. In about 20 minutes he found it. He went inside and saw a woman holding a knife to Jessica's throat.

"Hello boy, to be brief, give me the necklace or watch your little girlfriend die, moahahahahahahahahahaa!" said the woman. Jake reluctantly gave the necklace to her.

"No! Don't give it to her!" said Jessica. But Jake gave it to the woman.

"Finally, Simon will reward me for this! But first I have to get rid of you two, you know too much!"

"Noo!" cried Jessica but Jake said nothing. Up from the ground came a spiky snow monster.

"Groooooooooooooooooaaaaaaaarr!" roared the monster.

Jake felt the power glimmer out through his body. He made a great effort...

"Get lost, monster!" ...and he hurled the monster into the wall.

First it lay still on the ground but then it raised itself and ran against Jessica. Jessica used the power and ripped off the right arm from the monster.

"RAAAARRGH!"

The monster shook and roared. It tried to kill Jessica but missed and punched the wall.

An orange necklace fell out of the woman's pocket when she jumped away from the monster's punch, a necklace that Jake hadn't seen before.

Jake touched it and felt a fire power inside him. He made an effort and fire came out of his hands. The fire missed the monster by a centimetre but melted a bit on its left arm.

The monster ran against Jake and punched against him...

Black, black, black...

When Jake was knocked out Alex knew that both of their lives depended on her. She used the power to make a great snowball which she threw on the monster's left shoulder; her plan was to punch off the already injured arm.

"Yessssss!" she said when the arm loosened. The monster shook again and roared.

Now it had no arms. Jake woke up and sent a fire beam right in the monster's chest. The monster shook, roared and finally it lay down, dead.

"Nooooo, you killed it!" cried the woman.

“It tried to kill us! Now give me back that necklace.” Jake leapt at the woman and snatched the necklace from her hand.

“I’m gonna kill you!”

The woman threw a golden knife against Alex’s chest. Jake sent a fire beam to melt the knife but it just heated it up. The knife went right into Alex’s chest. She fell backwards. “Nooooooooooooooooo!” Jake cried. The woman just stood there laughing but Jake didn’t care. All he cared about was that a dark stain slowly spread out on Alex’s chest. Jake looked around and saw another necklace with a green crystal that he hadn’t seen before, he touched it and all his injuries were suddenly healed. He took it and touched Alex’s chest with it. Her injury healed immediately. He quickly put the necklace in his pocket with the other one.

“Quick, Jessica. Let’s get out of here!”

“OK, but how?”

To Jessica’s amazement, Jake pulled the white stone from his pocket.

“Where did you....?”

“No time to explain.” He inserted the jewel into the necklace. They touched it, both at the same time and everything went dark. The woman, left standing alone in the snow, gave them an angry look and teleported herself away.

Chapter 10

Hotdogs

Jessica and Jake crumpled as they were thrust into another place thousands of miles away. Their hearts were still thumping from their recent encounter with another of Simon Powell's evil minions in Stockholm, Sweden. Jake stood up, brushing snow out of his hair.

"Where are we?" he mumbled.

"I think we're in the Grand Plaza Hotel of New York." Jessica replied. They took a look around at them. There were fancy chandeliers and table cloths around them. Waiters were scurrying everywhere to serve the fine diners. Jake had never seen anything so delicate with all the glass and china.

"Anyway," said Jake. "We're on the last gem! I wonder what our power is this time." His face scrunched up in concentration and suddenly, a lion burst out of nowhere. People were screaming, glass was flying everywhere. Jessica concentrated and boom, she turned into a cat.

"Where do we go now?" Jake roared. "Can you understand me?"

"Yes, I suppose. Maybe because we are both cats. I like this power!" hissed Jessica. "Let's check in. Maybe we should stay here for the night." The Jessica Cat made an ugly face, and turned back into Jessica. There was a roar beside her, and she saw Jake return to normal. People were staring at them.

"I think they're afraid of us," Jessica whispered to her friend.

"Never mind that, because how are we going to pay for a room? This is pretty much the most expensive hotel on the planet!" said Jake.

"No problem," Jessica said. "I've got a credit card." She pulled a blue card out of her jeans pocket. Jake's eyes looked on in disbelief.

"You mean you've had it the whole time?" Jake stammered. He shook his head. "Come on, let's check in."

Jessica stopped and took out the necklace. It glinted in the light, its green color brightening suddenly. Nine of the ten holes were occupied by gleaming jewels. Could the start of all her adventures really have begun here, with this innocent looking necklace? She read the inscription, which was again glowing brightly.

*To find the jewel you do seek
A range of creatures you shall meet.
Search upon the Empire State –
A fire demon is your fate.*

Oh, now it's a fire demon? Well, let's hope it's a small one, she thought to herself as she followed Jake towards the check-in desk.

Fifteen minutes later, all thoughts of demons, small or large, were put out of Jessica's mind as she and Jake stood in the most luxurious room they had ever seen. The

beds were king size four poster beds. The mini bar was packed with candy bars and all the different sodas. The staff obviously wanted you to make yourself feel at home.

Jake settled on the bed. In five minutes, he was asleep. Jessica sighed. Jake really could be annoying sometimes. How did he do it?

Still...

She looked back over at him. Jake looked handsome in the moonlight. His hair was soft and wavy, his nose a perfect shape. And his smile, oh his smile...

No, she wasn't like the girls at her school. Always thinking about boys, they were. Crazy.

She lay on the bed and, gradually fell asleep.

"Come on, Jess, let's go!"

Jessica cracked her eyes open. "Where?" she muttered sleepily. Sunlight burst through the large windows.

"Where else? To the Empire State Building to get the last gem!" said Jake excitedly. Jessica dragged herself out of bed. Suddenly, Jake's smile faded as he looked out the window.

"What?" she asked him.

"This by far the worst..." he murmured. Jessica turned around and saw something right outside that she would never be able to forget.

An enormous, fiery demon, right by the window, with craters all over his body, was hurling flaming debris at the ground, sending people screaming in every direction. Its yellow eyes boiled with hate and its boiling skin spat sparks everywhere as the monster rampaged towards the Empire State Building. Simon had sent his most powerful demon to collect the last gem of power. The monster would never be stopped.

"Go!" Jake yelled. He threw himself out the window and in midair morphed into a falcon. Jessica shook her head. How did she get into these things? She clambered out the window and turned into a tiny brown sparrow, fighting against the wind.

"Go to the building!" Jake screeched. "*I'll hold him off!*" He swooped towards the demon but was shot down by a fireball.

"*So much for holding him off,*" she chattered to herself. Jessica Sparrow dove to the ground and she returned to normal form.

"Jake!" she yelled, running towards him. He didn't look too good. There were burns all over him and a large gash marked the crown of his head.

"Jessica..." he croaked. "Go get the gem. Leave me..."

"No!" she protested. "I can't leave you here like this!"

He choked. "I can defend myself. I'll turn into a snake. You be your sparrow and get the gem. Slip it into the necklace. I'll meet you back in Germany."

Slowly, Jessica nodded. With a heavy heart, she flashed into sparrow form and zipped away.

"*Good luck...*" she chattered.

Jake saw her leave then stood up. Miraculously, the fire monster hadn't seen them on the ground. He morphed into a bush-baby. Now it was time to counter-attack.

The Jake Bush-baby scurried towards the monster. He saw a weak spot, but unfortunately it wasn't in a very convenient place. The death spot was right on his chest.

"Let's have some fun!" Jake hissed angrily. *"You will not survive!"*

He flung himself on the monster's foot and began climbing up his leg, the demon trying to swat him off. But Jake would not be shaken. He continued scurrying up until he reached the monster's hip.

"Hot!" squeaked Jake. *"Too hot!"*

The small battle raged on.

Meanwhile, Jessica Bird was flying top speed heading towards the Empire State Building. Everywhere, shops like Victoria's Secret and Gamestop stood out. She passed over a park, full to bursting with street performers and hotdog stands. HOTDOGS! MUST GET HOTDOGS!

"No!" she screeched to herself. What was happening? Were her natural bird instincts taking over? She tried to calm herself and continued her journey.

Jessica Bird was going pretty well until she saw a handsome young sparrow perched on the wall.

"Come here!" he twittered. What an amazing chirp! Imagine her with him...no. She had to get the gem.

"Pull it together!" she cheeped to herself. Suddenly, the Empire State Building burst out in front of her. It was simply amazing, the sheer size of it. And she had to fly up it!

She hoped she wouldn't get tired.

Jake's strength was fading. It was hard enough climbing up a hot surface but the demon was making it even worse, swatting him with its enormous fiery hands.

Jake Bush-baby's eyes opened wide. He fell back on the ground, returning to normal. It was over. The demon had won the battle. He had no strength left. Jessica had better have gotten the last jewel.

The monster roared and ran towards the building. It really was monstrous, what they had done to him. In every place he had been beaten up. All of it was unfair. He didn't have to be doing this.

Jake thought about the situation for a second. Maybe he should try again. Become a better form. How about...

Jake Lamborghini was a hot pink color. His engine was roaring, ready to go. He zoomed off.

Everything was going too fast. How was he doing this? He was going 300 kph. The view was just unreal.

Suddenly, something dark came into his sights. The Empire State Building was right in front of him. Now he had to help Jessica.

He ignored the giant monster, turned into Jake Rat and scurried inside.

Meanwhile, Jessica had almost reached the top.

"Almost there!" she cheeped breathlessly. Can a sparrow be breathless?

The view was amazing. She could see the many pedestrians walking around, window-shopping. The noise of the cars and the honking could barely be heard from this height. It seemed more peaceful up here.

Until she saw the monster.

How had it gotten past Jake? Jessica Bird was sure that he could defeat the evil minion of Simon Powell. This situation was getting worse and worse.

Something was glowing up ahead. The turquoise! Jessica had found the last jewel! The end was near!

But no...

She couldn't leave Jake. He had been her only friend over the years. The world just wouldn't be right without him. Jessica couldn't believe what she was about to do. It was too dangerous.

Suddenly, out of the corner of her eye she saw the monster hurl something at her, and she heard it smash into the shiny side of the building. HOTDOGS! THEY WERE HOTDOGS! HOTDOGS!!!!

Jessica Bird soon forgot about Jake and the jewel, turning back into her normal form. She perched on the top for a few seconds, and then jumped to the hotdogs.

Jake Rat had just scurried out of the elevator onto the highest altitude that the elevator could take you up to when he saw a dark form jump from the top.

"Jessica!" he squeaked. What was she doing? He looked down and saw the hotdogs. Oh no. Time for desperate measures. He returned to human form, and then jumped.

Just before Jake jumped, he saw the astonished looks on the people's faces. Too bad he didn't have a camera for that. He could turn into a camera! But he had to save Jessica.

In midair, he turned into a gun, and then neatly fell into Jessica's arms.

Jessica seemed to awaken from her hotdog trance. She saw the gun in her arms with JAKE GUN on it and immediately understood. Jessica aimed briefly then fired the full clip at the monster.

Jessica felt the gun jerk in her arms and was pushed into the side of the building. She saw the crevasse under her feet and bent her legs as she landed. She laid the gun on the space beside her, and, soon enough, Jake came gasping back. She wondered what it would be like turning into something else beside an animal.

Jake got to his feet. He looked bruised up, like the monster had beaten him up badly and the bullets he had lost were taking their toll on him, like he had lost part of his body. Jake looked at his hand. He was missing a finger! He growled. Jake didn't look like he wanted to tell his story.

"Right," he said. "You should get the jewel. I'll hold him off, and maybe *this* time, I'll succeed."

There was silence. Both knew what was really going to happen. Only one would go on.

Jessica looked him in the eye and at that moment, both of them realized that both would have to come. They embraced, on that little platform on the Empire State Building. She wished that it were somewhere else.

The monster had had a bad day. He had been shouted at by his master, crawled on by a snake and been shot at. Very bad indeed. And he hadn't even had his promised lunch! The fiery monster looked at his lunch. They were locked in a very strange embrace.

Jake and Jessica suddenly broke apart. That was the last happy moment together. The only one ever.

"Bye," muttered Jake. He morphed into a sharp dagger and fell down the side of the building.

Jessica sighed. He was so brave. Sacrificing himself.

She turned and looked up. Even though she was higher than halfway, it still looked pretty high. The winds were blowing mercilessly up there. What animal could get past that? There was one she could try, but it wouldn't be pretty. She hoped she could control something like that.

Jessica took a deep breath then turned into a gorilla. It shook its back and screamed, then started to climb up the building.

The climb seemed to last forever. How long did it take to scale half a building with a gorilla? Windows were gleaming in the sunlight. Jessica Gorilla hoped that nobody would see her in the blinding light. If so, this whole mission would be altered drastically. They might not get the turquoise. Powell would have immortality. She and Jake wouldn't get it. But would she really want it? Would she want to live forever, always going to high school? That would be horror. Why did she have to have immortality, anyway? What good would it do?

With these questions testing her determination, she continued climbing through the terrible winds of altitude.

Meanwhile, Jake Dagger was plunging down into his foe. He hoped that he hadn't missed, and sure enough, the dagger pierced the monster, who roared in anger. Jake had gone very deep in his fiery skin.

"What if I change back right now?" Jake wondered. When he had finished, the dagger was no longer a dagger. The dagger that was no longer a dagger wasn't there in the demon's hide anymore. The dagger that was no longer a dagger, was, in fact Jake. And Jake was no longer there. He was inside the monster.

Everywhere Jake looked he saw either fire or lava. The experience was like being inside and active volcano. Luckily, most of the monster's stomach was hollow, so he had plenty of room to move around and inspect. Maybe he could hit the key point of the body in the monster and destroy it.

Wait, what was that? Did he see another chamber of the monster's body? What was in there?

He didn't get to inspect because suddenly, the floor began to rumble. A large fire appeared behind him. Uh-oh. The monster was going to burp!

Jake began to run up the monster's throat. He turned into a chimpanzee, then a lemur. Would he make it in time? The flame was right behind him, less than a foot away. Jake made his final decision. He shifted to cheetah form and leaped over the tongue, into open air. The flame exploded behind him, its tongues reaching to touch him. Not today.

The ground suddenly came rushing up to him and he twisted to try and land on his feet. Jake half managed it, and heard a nasty crack as he landed. He saw stars, and slowly drifted into unconsciousness.

Jessica was there, at the top of the Empire State Building. She could have sat there all day, watching the people who looked like ants walk by. But she couldn't. Her mission was to get Jake, who had the necklace, and leave with him.

Jessica turned into a rock and sailed downwards with the turquoise hidden in her rough outside. The ground appeared in front of her and just before she hit the ground she returned to human form and bent her legs to spare her a rough landing. Jake was lying on the ground unconscious with burns covering his body. Jessica ran over to him.

"Jake!" she shouted. "Wake up!" But it was no use. Jake was going to be out for a while. That left her alone against the monster. What animal would be good against it? Could she instead be a thing like Jake? Maybe a war machine...

Jessica Fighter zoomed through the air and fired her missiles at the monster. They collided at it and made a gaping hole in the monster. Fire burst everywhere, sizzling on the asphalt. Cars were wrecked against the stores and police had blocked off the area. SWAT vehicles stormed the area and fired off rounds at the monster.

Suddenly, the monster roared and swept his hand at the ground. Jessica thought it was a desperate act to clear the ground but instead she saw Jake clenched in his hand. He was still unconscious. Jessica returned to normal form.

"Give him back!" she shouted. The monster seemed to shake his head, mocking her.

Jessica looked it in the eyes in anger. She screamed and turn into a fiery demon just like the one in front of her. Except larger.

The demon recoiled in astonishment. Jessica Demon roared and fire came hurtling out of her hands into the face of the monster. He screamed and Jake fell out his hands on to the ground. Jessica morphed to normal form and picked him up.

"Are you okay?" she asked breathlessly. Jake seemed to fade in her arms but responded.

"Yeah," he answered shakily but loudly. He seemed not too badly hurt. "Let me help you against it. I want vengeance."

Jessica let him up and turned into her fire form. Jake, however, turned into an ice monster. Jessica began hurling fire missiles at the monster. Once she had finished, Jake continued the retaliation by freezing it. He kicked an enormous foot at it and the statue shattered, its shards blowing away in the wind.

Someone was standing where the monster had been. Somebody with a menacing smile. It was their enemy, Simon Powell.

Jake and Jessica shrank to normal size and scowled at their opponent. He sneered.

"Powell!" shouted Jake. "What are you doing here? I thought you let your minions deal with all the hard work."

"I intended to let them do so but instead I realized I could just wait for you to collect the gems then defeat you. You walked right into my trap!"

"Gosh," breathed Jessica. "He thinks he can defeat us? What is his power?" Jake shook his head in anger.

"Let's get him!"

Jake ran towards Powell, changing into a deadly snake as he went. He bit towards Powell's leg but Simon was no longer there. He had vanished.

Jake Snake hissed in frustration. Jessica looked anxiously around, as if expecting an attack at any moment.

Suddenly a sphere of water splashed in Jessica's face, and she fell to the ground, gasping.

"Jake!" she managed to get out. "Powell's got all the powers that we had before!"

Jake Snake coiled himself together and turned to normal. The situation had gone from bad to worse.

"If he has all of the powers then why can't we have them too?"

Jessica gasped. "Try! Turn invisible like he did!" No sooner had Jake vanished, Powell slammed into Jessica, throwing her to the ground yet again. Simon grinned in triumph. He held out his hand for the necklace and gems. All of the gems were in the necklace except for the turquoise, which was lying on the ground a few feet away.

Jake had been watching all of this from the sidelines. Now he crept towards the turquoise on the ground.

Simon's head suddenly turned. He sniffed the air once and threw a block of snow to where Jake was standing. It seemed to break on air.

Jake realized he had been discovered and scooped up the turquoise with Powell throwing ice, water and fire at him, and ran as fast as he could away. He felt bad leaving Jessica behind but he had a plan to rescue her.

"Jake!" Jessica screamed. But her friend had left her behind for the enemy.

Simon turned and glared at her. He roared and something came up behind him, seemingly out of thin air. Powell had summoned another monster.

This monster was more like a robot, its metal legs clinking and gleaming in the sun. Missiles were mounted on its shoulders and Jessica was sure that it had plenty other tricks in store for her.

Jessica ran off, following Jake. She heard the sound of a gun being fired and felt bullets zoom past her face. At least it hadn't shot any missiles yet.

She had thought too soon. The robot leant forward and the missiles launched themselves at her. Jessica turned invisible, hoping the missiles couldn't track her like that.

The missiles were right behind her, closing in fast. Could she fly and be invisible?

That way she could escape the missiles and the headlines of FLYING GIRL on the front page. She jumped in the air and felt the wonderful sensation, just for a moment. Then the situation came back into her mind and she panicked.

The missiles slammed into her. It was like being shot a hundred times and being burnt so badly she was almost ashes. Her powers of flight and invisibility died. She started to fall to the ground. Jessica hoped she would be unconscious before impact.

Jake was having problems of his own. It seemed like he had gone too far ahead of Jessica and the crowd was doing its best to stop him from going back to his girlfriend.

Girlfriend. That was new to him. What a strange taste on his tongue when he said it. What a strange feeling.

Jake cast an ice ball at a nearby statue. The crowd drew nearer to it like bugs to a light, giving him a chance to rush back.

When he got to where his battle had begun it looked even worse than before. Jessica was an unconscious prisoner, with a robot holding what looked like a butcher's knife to her throat. Jake stood before Simon Powell.

"Let her go," Jake said quietly. Simon shook his head in a sarcastic sad way.

Jake flew into action, flying towards the robot and dousing it with water, making the robot's circuits die and kill its owner. The dead robot went limp, releasing Jessica, letting her fall to the ground. Jake picked her up and flew straight up, not even glancing up at Simon Powell's look of disbelief.

Powell followed him in the air, preparing himself to do battle with Jake, who was handicapped by Jessica's unconscious form. Jake stopped and hovered at the same height as his opponent. He took a deep breath and threw water at Simon with one hand. Powell controlled it and tried to throw it back, but Jake stopped him and the ball of water continued to go back and forth, shimmering in the light of the sun. It finally came to a stop in the middle of Jake and Powell. They were both panting as they used two powers at once.

Jake grinned. He had a funny idea.

"I give up!" he spoke. "Have the necklace and gems."

As Powell flew up to Jake, the ball of water was still in between them. Jake froze it, suddenly launching it towards Powell. It connected right between the eyes, and Powell fell to the ground. When he was there, his body twitched, then lay still. Jake lowered himself to the ground, shaking Jessica awake. She didn't look too good with scorch marks all over. It looked like she had been hit by a missile.

Jake remembered the green necklace from Sweden, which was still in his pocket. He concentrated on all of the powers, closing his eyes and breathing in. A ray of energy appeared from the necklace and fell on Jessica. Her injuries were somehow healing. Jake was curing her!

Jessica grunted then rose. She looked much better.

"Time to go," Jake commented. Jessica sat beside him and took out the necklace.

"Can you believe that this is it?" she said. "We have collected the whole bunch of the jewels and gems? After all of this." She gestured at the damage around her. Fire was burning around them and sirens were wailing. Simon Powell lay on the ground

unconscious. The long battle was finally over. What would happen when they put the turquoise in the necklace? Where would they go?

Jake closed his eyes and gripped the hand of his old friend as she slipped the gem into the last spot of the necklace.

As their surroundings swirled into an inky blackness and the ground spun, Jake somehow knew that this was not over yet.

Chapter 11

The Final Journey

When the spinning stopped they looked around them.

"This isn't a new country," said Jessica.

They could hear quiet voices whispering but they could see nothing. Everything was white, like the inside of a cloud. A disembodied voice spoke through the air.

"Welcome, heroes from Germany. Thank you for returning our necklace. You have collected all the jewels and now you must choose your fate: to return to a mortal life or to leave your family and become immortal and have all your powers from the previous quests. But be warned. Once you have chosen, there is no turning back."

"Cool! All the powers! Imagine what we could do!" said Jake.

"But it's nice to be normal, even if you are a teenager. Otherwise we would be like Simon Powell and that was what we were trying to stop."

"Yes, I suppose so. So, we choose to be normal?"

"Yes."

"Your wish has been granted," said the voice. "You will return to your own time and place."

"But what about Powell? What will happen to him?"

"He will be taken care of. He must face all the monsters that you did but he will have no powers to help him."

"Will he survive?"

"Maybe. It will be your mission to guard against his future activities."

"What, another mission?" asked Jake. "I was looking forward to a holiday."

The cloud shuddered and slowly evaporated, and the teenagers felt themselves falling until they landed on something soft. It was Jessica's bed. They were home. From downstairs, they heard the voice of Jessica's mother.

"Jessica! Germany's Got Talent is on TV. Are you coming down?"

Jake and Jessica looked at each other and smiled.

"No thank you!" they called back.