

## The Desires of Power

My grandmother was always seemed so mysterious. She almost never came to visit but when she did she mostly kept to herself. She was still kind to us though, especially to me.

So with all this mysteriousness it was not a very big surprise that, in her house, she had a locked room that we were never allowed to go inside. I still remember the first time I found it.

I was only 7 years old, but can still clearly remember it like it was yesterday. It was a cold cloudy day. My brothers and sisters and I were on one of the few trips we ever had to my grandmother's. My sisters were in one room holding a giant make-believe tea party. My brothers were in the biggest room of the house which was completely cleared out so they could have wrestling matches all day long. I did not want to participate in a tea party with my sisters so I stayed in the hallway with my grandmother while she was knitting, knowing that my brothers would be too strong for me in a wrestling match.

As my grandmother was knitting I started wandering around looking in rooms until I came to the last door. I found that it was locked.

I asked, "Grandmother why is this door locked?"

Suddenly her voice sounded a bit hostile as she said, "You can go anywhere in my house but you can never go in that room, understand?"

But I was not listening. I was already pulling out a straightened paper clip and sliding it into the doorknob trying to unlock it. She flew across the room and slapped my hand, making me drop the paper clip. I started crying. It stung like crazy!

I cried, "What did you do that for?"

My grandmother looked at me and said, "Words have power but seem insignificant. You remember that and your life can change." Then she told me again to never go in there and sat back down to knit. I don't remember too much more because the rest of the day was a blur.

Years passed and we only were able to visit her once a year. And, for each visit we had complete run of the house, EXCEPT that one room. I tried to ask a few more times but each time, she refused to let me in the room or talk about it. I'd ask and she'd walk away from me. Eventually I gave up asking, pushing it to the back of my mind, even though I was still a bit curious.

Shortly, after I turned 18, my grandmother passed away. When the lawyer read the will to my brothers, sisters, and me, it turned out that my grandmother had left me her house! In the will, my grandmother had stated, right below the section saying the house was mine, she wrote "Do it. It's time." I was confused and so was everyone else. We left the lawyer's office and went home. I tossed and turned that night while I thought about what she had written.

Over the course of the next few days, I checked my grandmother's house for any problems that might need to be fixed. Then one day as I walked up the stairs to the second level of the home, I noticed hanging from the doorknob of the door I was never allowed to go in when I was younger, was a key. I didn't know what to think. I slowly walked to the door and cautiously

took the key. After looking at the key, I decided to unlock the door, not knowing that the world as I knew it, was about to change forever. I gently pushed on the door, it made a creaking sound as it opened.

I blinked in surprise. Rubbing my eyes with my hands to make sure that I wasn't having an illusion, I stood there in a cloud of confusion. It was just an empty room! I mean nothing was there, no desks, no chest-of-drawers, no chairs, no books... I had always imagined that there was a treasure, or a map, or magic wands, or hidden money. But there was NOTHING!

Then I noticed in the dark shadowy far corner of the room an intricately carved wooden box. Carved in the top was the picture of a dragon curled around a stone, that looked like a diamond. Curiosity got the better of me and I opened the box, thinking there would be riches, like diamonds. But, disappointed, I only found a small piece of paper. I opened the paper and saw a strange message on it. I was confused.

Reading the message aloud it said, "Lever 3. Lever 5. Lever 1. Lever 2. Lever 4." I was confused about the note and angry that it seemed like my grandmother was making fun of me.

I dropped the box on the floor and kicked the box. It slammed against the closest wall. I was immediately sorry. I walked over to get the box and saw that the wall seemed cracked. I pressed on the crack to check the damage, I was astonished to find a panel popping out with 5 levers.

Suddenly I understood the message. I pushed down the third lever, then the fifth, then the first, then the second, and then finally the fourth. The whole wall started to slide apart, revealing a passageway. My curiosity was burning bright so I entered the passage. The further I went down the passage the hotter my curiosity burned, all along the passageway walls were paintings and drawings of people fighting. High in between the different sides of the people fighting was a diamond ring. It looked like a story being told.

I came to a sudden stop, facing a closed door. It wouldn't budge. Then I had an idea. I pulled out the key from the locked door and tried it on this locked door. It opened! I crept in through the doorway and found a large round room with what looked like a large green rock in the center. I walked over to the rock and rub my hands along the rock. It was weird... it didn't feel cold like a rock... instead it was warm.

I jumped back as the 'rock' started to move. I stood back with my eyes wide, jaw dropped, and still as a statue, as I watched a creature uncurling itself. It wasn't a rock at all - IT WAS A DRAGON!!

I didn't know what to do. I wanted to run but my legs felt like they were frozen to the ground. I thought I would faint when all the sudden the dragon started speaking.

"To pass by me you must answer a riddle. Answer correctly and you will move on to the next room where your goal lies. Answer incorrectly and you will die." the dragon hissed out a steamy breath.

I just simply nodded.

"What has the most power in the world, but to most people seems insignificant?"

I racked my brain thinking for an answer. Softly, I heard my grandmother's voice coming back to me, "*Words have power but seem insignificant. You remember that and your life can change.*"

Confidently, I said, "Words."

The dragon stood up and with a hot breath that I was afraid was about to roast me alive, he said, "Correct. You may move on. In the next room, you will find two rings. But beware, there is much magic in that room. You may not be able to withstand it. Do not be dragged in as countless others have been. Remember not is all as it seems, sometime the simplest thing can have the greatest impact."

I didn't waste any time I ran past him into a similar room to the one I just left but much smaller. In the middle on a stone pillar sat a cushion that held 2 rings. I looked at them and the one on the left was small, silver, and a single diamond. The one on the right was much larger made of gold with three diamonds bunched together. I began to reach for the large ring, it was so pretty. But the dragon's warning came back to me...*simplest*... so I quickly pulled my hand back. I thought about it and realized he was warning me not to choose the large beautiful ring. I felt the larger ring trying to pull me in.

Resisting it, I reached out to the small silver ring, realizing as my hand neared it that it seemed to make a deep connection with me. I gently picked up the ring and slid it on my middle finger. I felt a wave of power course through my veins. In my head, the dragon spoke again, "*You made a wise choice. But know that your life will forever be changed. Seek out the Ranger of the Forest of Life, or as you humans know it, the Glade Forest.*"

And, that is when my adventures really began.....