Nothing was going right with the Wizards’ University. When High Chancellor Querida decided that she could not change the world and run the University as well, she took herself and her three cats off to a cottage beside the Waste, leaving the older wizards in charge. The older wizards seized the opportunity to retire. Now, eight years after the tours ended, the University was run by a committee of rather younger wizards, and it was steadily losing money.

For forty years before that, the University had been forced to provide for Mr. Chesney’s offworld Pilgrim Parties. Wizards had also been made to provide magical events for the tours. Tourists from the next universe had come in droves every year, expecting to have adventures with elves, dwarfs, dragons, and the powers of darkness, and most years this left the world laid waste. The wizards then had to put it straight for the next year. Mr. Chesney, whose orders were backed by a powerful demon, had been very strict in his requirements, and he had paid for this service in gold. When almost everyone in the world united to put a stop to the
Pilgrim Parties, the payments naturally stopped, so it was small wonder that the University was short of funds.

“We need to make the place pay somehow,” the Chairman, Wizard Corkoran, said anxiously at the beginning-of-term meeting. “We’ve raised the student fees again—”

“And got fewer students than ever,” Wizard Finn pointed out, although to hear the shouts and the bang and scrape of luggage from the courtyard outside, you would have thought most of the world was currently arriving there.

“Fewer, yes,” Corkoran said, looking at the list by his elbow, “but the ones we have got must all come from very rich families, or they couldn’t afford the fees. It stands to reason. I propose we ask these families for money; we could put up a plaque with their names on. People like that.”

Wizard Finn shot a look at the lovely Wizard Myrna, who turned down the corners of her shapely mouth. The rest of the committee simply stared at Corkoran with different sorts of blankness. Corkoran was always having ideas, and none of them worked. The students thought Corkoran was wonderful. Many of them imitated his style of wearing an offworld necktie over an offworld T-shirt—both with pictures on—and did their hair like Corkoran in a wavy blond puff brushed back from the forehead. Quite a few of the girl students were in love with him. But then they were only taught by him, Finn thought gloomily. They didn’t have to wrestle with his ideas of how to run a university.

“We can’t afford a plaque,” said Wizard Dench, the Bursar. “Even with all the fees paid, we can only just afford to pay the staff and buy food. We can’t afford to mend the roofs.”

Wizard Corkoran was used to Dench saying they couldn’t afford things. He waved this away. “Then I’ll float a commemorating spell,” he said. “We can have it circling the Spellman Building or the Observatory tower—transparently, of course, so it won’t get in the way.” When nobody said anything to this, he added, “I can maintain it in my spare time.”

Nobody said anything to this either. They all knew Corkoran never had any spare time. All the time he could spare from
teaching—and much that he couldn’t spare, too—went to his research on how to get to the moon. The moon was his passion. He wanted to be the first man to walk on it.

“That’s settled then,” said Corkoran. “Money’s bound to pour in. If you just take my first-year tutorial group, you can see the possibilities. Look.” He ran a finger down the list beside him. “There’s King Luther’s eldest son—he’s Crown Prince of Luteria, and he’ll own all sorts of land—Prince Lukin. And the next one’s the sister of Emperor Titus. At least I believe she’s his half sister, but I’m sure we can prevail on the Empire to make a large donation. Then there’s a dwarf. We’ve never had a dwarf before, but they all come from fastnesses stuffed with treasure. And there’s this girl Elda. She’s the daughter of Wizard Derk, who—”

“Er—” began Finn, who knew Elda quite well.

“Wizard Derk is a wealthy and important man,” Corkoran continued. “Did you say something, Finn?”

“Only that Derk doesn’t approve of the University,” Finn said. It was not what he had been going to say.

“Obviously he changed his mind when he found his daughter had talent,” Corkoran said, “or he wouldn’t be paying for her to come here. All right. That’s agreed then. Myrna, you’re married to a bard. You know how to use Powers of Persuasion. You’re in charge of sending a letter to the parents of all students who—”

“I, er, have another idea,” Wizard Umberto put in from the end of the conference table. Everyone turned to him hopefully. Umberto was quite young, rather fat, and almost never said anything. The general belief was that Umberto was a brilliant astrologer, except that he never said anything about his work. He went pink, seeing them all looking at him, and stammered, “Oh. Er. I think we should, well, you know, be able to set up a scheme to let people pay for magical information. You know, come from miles away to be told secrets.”

“Oh, don’t be silly, Umberto,” said Wizard Wermacht. Wermacht was the youngest wizard there, and very proud of the fact. “You’re describing just what we do, anyway.”

“But only for students, Wermacht,” Umberto stammered shyly. “I
thought we could, er, sell everyone horoscopes and so forth.”

“But then they wouldn’t be secrets!” Wermacht said scornfully. “Your usual muddled thinking. I suggest—”

“Umberto and Wermacht,” Corkoran said, “you are interrupting the Chair.”

At this Umberto went pinker still, and Wermacht said, “I’m so sorry, Corkoran. Please do go on.”

“I’d nearly finished,” Corkoran said. “Myrna is going to send out a letter to the parents of all students, asking for the largest possible donation and telling them their names will go up in a spell with the ones who give most in big letters at the top. We’re bound to get a good response. That’s it. Now forgive me if I rush away. My latest moon studies are very delicate and need watching all the time.” He gathered up his lists and stormed out of the Council Hall, with his tie flapping over his shoulder.

“I hate these meetings,” Finn said to Myrna as they walked out into the stone foyer together, where the shouts and rumbles from the arriving students echoed louder than ever.

“So do I,” Myrna said dourly. “Why do I always end up doing the work for Corkoran?”

Finn found Myrna the most ravishing woman he knew. She had brains and beauty. He was always hoping she might be persuaded to give up her bardic husband and turn to him instead. “It’s too bad,” he said. “Umberto just sits there like Humpty-Dumpty, and Wermacht throws his weight about and then crawls to Corkoran. Dench is useless. It’s no wonder Corkoran’s relying on you.”

“Of course he does,” said Myrna. “His head’s in the moon. And I didn’t notice you offering to do anything.”

“Well,” said Finn. “My schedule—”

“As if I hadn’t enough to do!” Myrna went on. “I’ve seen to all the students’ rooms, and the college staff, and the kitchens, and the bedding, and there’s probably going to be an outcry when someone realizes that I had to give Derk’s daughter the concert hall to sleep in. She’s too big for anywhere else. How is it, anyway, that Corkoran’s teaching her? Why does he always grab the most
interesting students?”

“That’s just what I was going to say!” Finn cried out, seeing his chance to be truly sympathetic to Myrna. “I’ve met most of those students. I knew them as kids when I was Wizard Guide on the tours, and I tell you it’s going to serve Corkoran right for hogging the ones he thinks are best, or richest, or whatever he thinks they are.”

“They probably are best,” Myrna said, barely listening. “I did the admissions, too. The University secretaries nearly went mad over that, and they’ll go mad again now they have to get this letter out. And on top of it all, I’ve just discovered I’m pregnant!”

“Oh,” said Finn. There, he thought, went his hopes of Myrna’s leaving her bard. All he could think of was to say lamely, “Well, anyway, Corkoran’s in for a shock when he sees one of his new students.”

Finn was right. Next morning Corkoran hurried into the tall stone tutorial chamber and only just managed not to stand stock-still, gaping. He bit his teeth together. He knew better than anyone that his fine, fair good looks caused most students to hang adoringly on his words. He thought of his face as his best teaching aid and was well aware that letting his jaw hang spoiled the effect. So he plastered a smile across it. But he still stood rooted to the spot.

Blazing out of the decidedly motley set of young people in the room—like a sunburst, Corkoran thought dazedly—was a huge golden griffin. He was not sure he was safe. Not exactly a huge griffin, he told himself hastily. He had heard that some griffins were about twice the size of an elephant. This one was only as large as an extra-big plow horse. But she—he could somehow tell it was a she; there was an enormous, emphatic sheness to this griffin—she was so brightly golden in fur and crest and feathers, so sharply curved of beak, and so fiercely alert in her round orange eyes that at first sight she seemed to fill the room. He noticed a dwarf somewhere down by her great front talons—and noticed with irritation that the fellow was in full war gear—but that was all. He very nearly turned and ran away.
Still, he had come to teach these students and also to find out, if possible, how wealthy their parents were, so he pasted the smile wider on his face and began his usual speech of welcome to the University.

The students gazed at him with interest, particularly at his tie, which this morning had two intertwined pink and yellow dragons on it. and at the words on his T-shirt under the tie.

“What’s **MOON SOON** mean?” rumbled the dwarf. Probably he thought he was whispering. It gave a peculiarly grating, surly boom to his voice.

“Hush!” said the griffin, probably whispering, too. It sounded like a very small scream. “It may mean something magical.”

The dwarf leaned forward with a rattle of mail and peered. “There’s another word under his tie,” he grated. “**SHOT.** It’s **SHOT.** Why should anyone shoot the moon?”

“It must be a spell,” small-screamed the griffin.

Corkoran realized that between the two of them he was being drowned out. “Well, that’s enough about the University,” he said. “Now I want to know about you. I suggest each of you speaks in turn. Tell the rest of us your name, who your parents are, and what made you want to come and study here, while the rest of you listen quietly. Why don’t you start?” he said, pointing at the large, shabby young man on the other side of the griffin. “No, no, you don’t have to stand up!” Corkoran added hastily as the young man’s morose-looking face reddened and the young man tried to scramble to his feet. “Just sit comfortably and tell us about yourself. Everyone can be quite relaxed about this.”

The young man sank back, looking far from relaxed. He seemed worried. He pulled nervously at the frayed edges of his thick woolen jacket and then planted a large hand on each knee so that they covered the patches there. “My name is Lukin,” he said. “My father is King of Luteria—in the north, you know—and I’m, er, his eldest son. My father, well, how do I put this? My father isn’t paying my fees. I don’t think he could afford to, anyway. He doesn’t approve of my doing magic, and he, er, doesn’t want me here. He likes his
family at home with him.”

Corkoran’s heart sank at this, and sank further as Lukin went on, “Our kingdom’s very poor, you know, because it was always being devastated by Mr. Chesney’s tours. But my grandmother—my mother’s mother, that is—was a wizard—Melusine, you may have heard of her—and I’ve inherited her talent. Sort of. From the time I was ten I was always having magical accidents, and my grandmother said the only way to stop having them was to train properly as a wizard. So she left me her money for the fees when she died, but of course the fees have gone up since her day and I’ve had to save and economize in order to be here. But I do intend to learn, and I will stop having accidents. A king shouldn’t spend his time making holes in things.” He was almost crying with earnestness as he finished.

Corkoran could have cried, too. He made a secret mark on his list to tell Myrna not to waste time asking King Luther for money and asked, “What kinds of accidents do you have?”

Lukin sighed. “Most kinds. But I’m worst when there’s anything to do with pits and holes.”

Corkoran had no notion how you put a stop to that kind of trouble. Perhaps Myrna did. He added another scribble to remind himself to ask Myrna. He said encouragingly, “Well, you’ve come to the right place, Lukin. Thank you. Now you.” He pointed to the large young woman sitting behind the dwarf. She was very elegantly dressed in dark suede, and the elegance extended to her long, fine, fair hair, which was drawn stylishly back inside an expensive-looking scarf to set off her decidedly beautiful hawklike face. From the look of command on that face and the hugely expensive fur cloak thrown casually over the chair behind her, Corkoran had no doubt that she was the Emperor’s sister.

She gave him a piercing blue-eyed look. “I am Olga,” she said.

“And?” invited Corkoran.

“I do not wish to say,” she replied. “Here I wish to be accepted as I am, purely for magical ability. I have been raising winds and monsters since I was quite a small child.” She sat back, clearly intending to say no more.
So the Emperor’s sister wishes to remain incognito, Corkoran thought. Fair enough. It could be awkward with the other students. He nodded knowingly and pointed to the tall, narrow, brown-faced fellow half hidden behind Olga and the griffin’s left wing. “And you?”

“Felim ben Felim,” the young man replied, bowing in the manner of the eastern countries. “I, too, wish to say little about myself. If the Emir were to discover I am here studying, he would very likely dispatch assassins to terminate me. He has promised that he would, at least.”

“Oh,” said Corkoran. “Er, is the Emir likely to discover you?”

“I trust not,” Felim replied calmly. “My tutor, the wizard Fatima, has cast many spells to prevent the Emir from noticing my absence, and she furthermore assures me that the wards of the University will be considerable protection to me also. But our lives are in the laps of the gods.”

“True,” Corkoran said, making a particularly black and emphatic scribble beside Felim’s name. He did not know Wizard Fatima and certainly did not share the woman’s faith that the University could protect anyone from assassins. Myrna must definitely not send a letter to Felim’s parents. If the answer came in assassins, they could all be in trouble. A pity. People were rich in the Emirates. He sighed and pointed with his pen at the other young woman in the group, sitting quietly behind Lukin. Corkoran had her placed in his mind, almost from the start, as the daughter of Wizard Derk. He had met Derk more than once and had been struck by his unassuming look. Quite extraordinary, Corkoran always thought, for the man whom the gods had trusted with the job of setting the world to rights after what Mr. Chesney had done to it to look so modest. The young woman had a similar humble, almost harassed look. She was rather brown and very skinny and sat huddled in a shawl of some kind, over which her hair fell in dark, wet-looking coils on her shoulders. She twisted her long fingers in the shawl as she spoke. Corkoran could have sworn her dark ringlets of hair twisted about, too. She gave him a worried stare from huge greenish eyes.
“I’m Claudia,” she said huskily, “and the Emperor of the South is my half brother. Titus is in a very difficult position over me, because my mother is a Marshwoman, and the Senate doesn’t want to acknowledge me as a citizen of the Empire. My mother was so unhappy there in the Empire, you see, that she went back to the Marshes. The Senate thinks I should renounce my citizenship as Mother did, but Titus doesn’t want me to do that at all. And the trouble over me got worse when it turned out that the gift for magic that all Marshpeople have didn’t mix at all with Empire magic. I’m afraid I have a jinx. In the end Titus sent me here secretly, for safety, hoping I could learn enough to cure the jinx.”

Corkoran tried not to look as amazed as he felt. His eyes shot to Olga. Was she Derk’s daughter then? He switched his eyes back to Claudia with an effort. He could see she had Marsh blood now. That olive skin and the thinness, which always made him think of frogs. His sympathy was with the Senate there. Perhaps they would pay the University to keep the girl. “What kind of jinx?” he said.

A slightly greenish blush swept over Claudia’s thin face. “It goes through everything.” She sighed. “It made it rather difficult to get here.”

This was exasperating, Corkoran thought. Something that serious was almost certainly incurable. It was frustrating. So far he had a king’s son with no money, an obviously wealthy girl who would not say who she was, a young man threatened with assassins if the University admitted he was here, and now the Emperor’s jinxed sister, whom the Empire didn’t want. He turned with some relief to the dwarf. Dwarfs always had treasure—and tribes, too, who were prepared to back them up. “You now,” he said.

The dwarf stared at him. Or rather, he stared at Corkoran’s tie, frowning a little. Corkoran never minded this. He preferred it to meeting students’ eyes. His ties were designed to deflect the melting glances of girl students and to enable him to watch all students without their watching him. But the dwarf went on staring and frowning until Corkoran was almost uncomfortable. In the manner of dwarfs, he had his reddish hair and beard in numbers of skinny pigtails, each one with clacking bones and tufts of red cloth plaited into it. The braids of his beard were noticeably
thin and short, and the face that frowned from under the steel war helm was pink and rounded and young.

“Ruskin,” the dwarf said at last in his peculiar blaring voice. The voice must be caused by resonance in the dwarf’s huge, square chest, Corkoran decided. “Dwarf, artisan tribe, from Central Peaks fastness, come by the virtual manumission of apostolic strength to train on behalf of the lower orders.”

“How do you mean?” Corkoran asked.

The dwarf’s bushy red eyebrows went up. “How do I mean? Obvious, isn’t it?”

“Not to me,” Corkoran said frankly. “I understood dwarf and Central Peaks, and that was all. Start again, and say it in words that people who are not dwarfs can understand.”

The dwarf sighed, booming. “I thought wizards were supposed to divine things,” he grumbled. “All right. I’m from one of the lowest tribes in our fastness, see. Artisans. Got that? Third lowest. Drudges and whetters are lower. Six tribes above us, miners, artists, designers, jewelers, and so on. Forgemasters at the top. All ordering us about and lording it over us and making out we can’t acquire the skills that give us the privileges they have. And around this time last year we got proof that this was nonsense. That was when Storn and Becula, both artisans and one a girl, forged a magic ring better than anything the forgemasters ever did, But the ring was turned down for treasure because they were only artisans. See? So we got angry, us artisans, and brought in drudges and whetters, and it turned out they’d made good things, too, but hadn’t even submitted them as treasure because they knew they’d be turned down. Oppression, that’s what it was, black oppression—”

“All right. Don’t get carried away,” Corkoran said. “Just explain how you come into it.”

“Chosen, wasn’t I?” Ruskin said. A slight, proud smile flitted above his plaited beard. “It had to be someone young enough not to be noticed missing and good enough to benefit here. They picked me. Then each one of them, young and old, man and woman, from all three tribes, put down a piece of gold for the fees and a piece of their magic into me. That’s the apostolic part. Then I came away
secretly. That’s what we call virtual manumission. And I’m to learn to be a proper wizard, so that when I am, I go back and smash those forge-masters and all the rest of them. Overthrow the injustice of the old corrupt order, see?”

And now a dwarf revolutionary! Corkoran thought. Bother! He saw that if Myrna sent out her letter to Central Peaks fastness, it would almost certainly bring an enraged party of forgemasters (and so forth) here to remove Ruskin and his fees with him. He made another note by Ruskin’s name, while he asked, “Is that why you’re in full armor?”

“No,” Ruskin answered. “I have to come before my tutor properly dressed, don’t I?” He eyed Corkoran’s tie and T-shirt again and frowned.

“I advise you to leave it off in future,” Corkoran told him. “Iron interferes with magic, and you won’t know enough to counteract it until your second year. You’re going to have trouble, anyway, if you’re working with bits and pieces of other people’s magic.”

“Don’t think so,” Ruskin blared. “We dwarfs are used to that. Do it all the time. And we work with iron.”

Corkoran gave him up and turned, finally, to the griffin. “You.”

All this while the griffin had sat brightly swiveling an eye on each student who spoke and quivering with eagerness for her turn. Now she fairly burst forth, both wings rising and tufted tail lashing so that Felim and Olga had to move out of their way. “I’m Elda,” she said happily. “Wizard Derk’s daughter. I used to be his youngest child, but now I’ve got two younger than me: Angelo and Florence. Flo’s wings are pink. She’s the baby. She’s beautiful. Angelo’s wings are brown, a bit like Callette’s without the stripes, and he’s a magic user already. Mum says—”


“Everyone asks about that,” Elda said sunnily. “Dad made us, you know. He put some of himself and Mum and eagle and lion—and cat for me—into an egg, and we hatched. At least, we had an egg each. There’s me and Lydda and Don and Callette and Kit, who are
all griffins. Shona and Blade are my human brother and sister, like Angelo and Flo, except that Shona and Blade don’t have wings. Shona’s married. She’s gone to run that new Bardic College out on the east coast. She’s got three girls and two boys, and I’m an aunt. And all the others except Mum and Dad and the babies have gone over to the West Continent in two ships, because there’s a war there—only Lydda’s flying, because she’s a long-distance flier and she can do a hundred and fifty miles without coming down to rest, but Dad made her promise to keep in sight of the ships just in case, because Kit and Blade are the ones who can do magic. Callette—”

“But what about yourself?” Corkoran asked, managing to break in on this spate of family history.

“What about me?” Elda said, tipping her bright bird head to look at him out of one large orange eye. “You mean, why did Mum send me here to keep me out of mischief?”

“More or less,” Corkoran said, wincing at that piercing eye. “I take it you have magic.”

“Oh, yes,” Elda agreed blithely. “I’m ever so magical. It keeps coming on in spurts. First of all I could only undo stasis spells, but after we saw the gods, I could do more and more. Mum and Dad have been teaching me, but they were so busy looking after the babies and the world that Mum says I got rather out of hand. When the others all went off on the ships, I got so cross and jealous that I went into the Waste and pushed a mountain out of shape. Then Mum said, ‘That’s enough, Elda. You’re going to the University whatever your father says.’ Dad still doesn’t know I’m here. Mum’s going to break it to him today. I expect there’ll be rather a row. Dad doesn’t approve of the University, you know.” Elda turned her head to fix her other eye on Corkoran, firmly, as if he might try to send her home.

The thought of doing anything to a griffin who could push a mountain out of shape turned Corkoran cold and clammy. This bird—lion—female—thing made him feel weak. He pulled his tie straight and coughed. “Thank you, Elda,” he said when his voice had come back. “I’m sure we can turn you into an excellent wizard.” And bother again! He made yet another note on his list for Myrna.
If Derk was angry about Elda’s being here, he had certainly better not receive a demand for money. Derk had the gods behind him. Oh, dear. That made five out of six. “Right,” he said. “Now we have to sort out your timetable of classes and lectures and give you all a title for the essay you’re going to write for me this coming week.”

He managed to do this. Then he fled, thankfully, back to his moon-lab.

“He didn’t say anything about the moon,” Ruskin grumbled as the six new students came out into the courtyard, into golden early-autumn sunlight, which gave the old, turreted buildings a most pleasing mellow look.

“But he surely will,” said Felim, and added thoughtfully, “I do not think assassins could reach me on the moon.”

“Don’t be too sure of that,” said Lukin, who knew what kings and emirs could do when they set their minds on a thing. “Why is the Emir—?”

Olga, who knew what it felt like to have secrets, interrupted majestically. “What have we got next? Wasn’t there a lecture or something?”

“I’ll see,” said Elda. She hooked a talon into the bag around her neck and whisked out a timetable, then reared on her hindquarters to consult it. It already had claw holes in all four corners. “A class,” she said. “Foundation Spellcasting with Wizard Wermacht in the North Lab.”

“Where’s that?” Claudia inquired shyly.

“And have we time for coffee first?” Olga asked.

“No. it’s now,” said Elda. “Over there, on the other side of this courtyard.” She stowed the timetable carefully back in her bag. It was a bag she had made herself and covered with golden feathers from her last molt. You could hardly see she was wearing it. The five others gave it admiring looks as they trooped across the courtyard, past the statue of Wizard Policant, founder of the University, and most of them decided they must get a bag like that, too. Olga had been using the pockets of her fur cloak to keep papers in—everyone handed out papers to new students all the time—and
Ruskin had stuffed everything down the front of his chain mail. Claudia and Felim had left all the papers behind in their rooms, not realizing they might need any of them, and Lukin had simply lost all his.

“I can see I’ll have to be a bit better organized,” he said ruefully. “I got used to servants.”

They trooped into the stony and resounding vault of the North Lab to find most of the other first-year students already there, sparsely scattered about the rows of desks, with notebooks busily spread in front of them.

“Oh, dear,” said Lukin. “Do we need notebooks as well?”

“Of course,” said Olga. “What made you think we wouldn’t?”

“My teacher made me learn everything by heart,” Lukin explained.

“No wonder you have accidents then,” Ruskin boomed. “What a way to learn!”

“It’s the *old* way,” Elda said. “When my brothers Kit and Blade were learning magic, Deucalion wouldn’t let them write anything down. They had to recite what they’d been told in the last lesson absolutely right before he’d teach them anything new. Mind you, they used to come back seething, especially Kit.”

“It is *not* so the old way!” Ruskin blared. “Dwarfs make notes and plans, and careful drawings, before they work any magic at all.”

While he was speaking, the lab resounded to heavy, regular footsteps, as if a giant were walking through it, and Wizard Wermacht came striding in with his impeccably ironed robes swirling around him. Wermacht was a tall wizard, though not a giant, who kept his hair and the little pointed beard at the end of his long, fresh face beautifully trimmed. He walked heavily because that was impressive. He halted impressively behind the lectern, brought out an hourglass, and impressively turned it sand side upward. Then he waited impressively for silence.

Unfortunately Ruskin was used to heavy, rhythmic noises. He had lived among people beating anvils all his life. He failed to notice Wermacht and went on talking. “The dwarfs’ way *is* the old way. It
goes back to before the dawn of history.”

“Shut up, you,” ordered Wermacht.

Ruskin’s round blue eyes flicked to Wermacht. He was used to overbearing people, too. “We’d been writing notes for centuries before we wrote down any history,” he told Elda.

“I said shut up!” Wermacht snapped. He hit the lectern with a crack that made everyone jump and followed that up with a sizzle of mage-fire. “Didn’t you hear me, you horrible little creature?”

Ruskin flinched along with everyone else at the noise and the flash, but at the words horrible little creature his face went a brighter pink and his large chest swelled. He bowed with sarcastic politeness. “Yes, but I hadn’t quite finished what I was saying,” he growled. His voice was now so deep that the windows buzzed.

“We’re not here to listen to you,” Wermacht retorted. “You’re only a student—you and the creature that’s encouraging you—unless, of course, both of you strayed in here by mistake. I don’t normally teach animals or runts in armor. Why are you dressed for battle?”

Elda’s beak opened and clapped shut again. Ruskin growled, “This is what dwarfs wear.”

“Not in my classes you don’t,” Wermacht snapped, and took an uneasy glance at the vibrating windows. “And can’t you control your voice?”

Ruskin’s face flushed beyond pink, into beetroot. “No. I can’t. I’m thirty-five years old, and my voice is breaking.”

“Dwarfs,” said Elda, “are different.”

“Although only in some things,” Felim put in, leaning forward as smooth and sharp as a knife-edge. “Wizard Wermacht, no one should be singled out for personal remarks at this stage. We are all new here. We will all be making mistakes.”

Felim seemed to have said the right thing. Wermacht contented himself with putting his eyebrows up and staring at Felim. And Felim stared back until, as Claudia remarked to Olga afterward, one could almost hear knives clashing. Finally Wermacht shrugged and turned to the rest of the class. “We are going to start this
course by establishing the first ten laws of magic. Will you all get out your notebooks and write? Your first big heading is, ‘The Laws of Magic’

There was a scramble for paper and pens. Olga dived for her cloak pockets, Elda for her feathered bag, and Ruskin for the front of his armor. Felim looked bemused for a moment, then fumbled inside his wide sash until he found what seemed to be a letter. Ruskin passed him a stick of charcoal and was rewarded with a flashing smile of gratitude. It made Ruskin stare. Felim’s narrow, rather stern face seemed to light up. Meanwhile Elda saw Claudia sitting looking lost and hastily tore her a page out of her own notebook. Claudia smiled almost as shinningly as Felim, a smile that first put two long creases in her thin cheeks and then turned the left-hand crease into a dimple, but she waved away the pen Elda tried to lend her. The words *Laws of Magic* had already appeared at the top of the torn page. Elda blinked a little.

Lukin just sat there.

“Smaller headings under that, numbered,” proclaimed Wermacht. “Law One, the Law of Contagion or Part for Whole. Law Two—you back there, is your memory particularly good or something? Yes, you with the secondhand jacket.”

“Me?” said Lukin. “I’m sorry. I didn’t realize I’d need a notebook.”

Wermacht frowned at him, dreadfully. “That was extremely stupid of you. This is basic stuff. If you don’t have this written down, you’re going to be lost for the rest of the time you’re here. How did you expect to manage?”

“I, er, I wasn’t sure. I mean—” Lukin seemed completely lost. His good-looking but sulky face grew even redder than Ruskin’s had been.

“Precisely.” Wermacht stroked his little pointed beard smugly. “So?”

“I was trying to conjure a notebook while you were talking,” Lukin explained. “From my room.”

“Oh, you think you can work advanced magic, do you?” Wermacht asked. “Then by all means go ahead and conjure.” He
looked meaningfully at his hourglass. “We shall wait.”

At Wermacht’s sarcastic tone Lukin’s red face went white—white as a candle, Elda thought, sliding an eye around at him. Her brother Blade went white when he was angry, too. She scrabbled hastily to tear another page out of her notebook for him. Before she had her talons properly into the paper, however, Lukin stood up and made a jerky gesture with both hands.

Half of Wermacht’s lectern vanished away downward into a deep pit that opened just in front of it. Wermacht snatched his hourglass off the splintered remains and watched grimly as most of his papers slid away downward too. Deep, distant echoings came up from the pit, along with cold, earthy air.

“Is this your idea of conjuring?” he demanded.

“I was trying,” Lukin answered. Evidently he had his teeth clenched. “I was trying for a paper off your desk. To write on. Those were nearest.”

“Then try again,” Wermacht commanded him. “Fetch them back at once.”

Lukin took a deep breath and shut his eyes. Sweat shone at the sides of his white face. Beside him Olga began scrabbling in her cloak pockets, watching Lukin anxiously sideways while she did so. Nothing happened. Wermacht sighed, angrily and theatrically. Olga’s hawklike face took on a fierce, determined look. She whispered something.

A little winged monkey appeared in the air, bobbing and chittering over the remains of the lectern, almost in Wermacht’s face. Wermacht recoiled, looking disgusted. All the students cried out, once with astonishment and then again when the wind fanned by the monkey’s wings reached them. It smelled like a piggery. The monkey meanwhile tumbled over itself in the air and dived down into the pit.

“Is this your idea of a joke?” Wermacht snapped at Lukin. “You with the secondhand jacket! Open your eyes!”

Lukin’s eyes popped open. “What do—”

He stopped as the monkey reappeared from the pit, wings
beating furiously, hauling the missing part of the lectern in one hand and the papers in the other. The smell was awful.

“That’s nothing to do with me,” Lukin protested. “I only make holes.”

The monkey tossed the piece of lectern against the rest of it. This instantly became whole again, and it tossed the papers in a heap on top. With a long, circular movement of its tail, a rumbling and a crash and a deep growling thunk, like a dungeon door shutting, it closed the hole, leaving the stone floor just as it had been before Lukin tried to conjure. Then the monkey winked out of existence, gone like a soap bubble. The smell, if possible, was worse.

Olga, who had gone as white as Lukin, silently passed him a small shining notebook. Lukin stared at it as it lay across his large hand. “I can’t take this! It looks really valuable!” The book seemed to have a cover of beaten gold inlaid with jewels.

“Yes, you can,” Olga murmured. “You need it. It’s a present.”

“Thanks,” Lukin said, and his face flooded red again.

Wermacht hit the newly restored lectern sharply. “Well?” he said. “Is anyone going to admit to the monkey?”

Evidently nobody was. There was a long, smelly silence.

“Tchah!” said Wermacht. He gestured, and all the windows sprang open. He piled his papers neatly in front of him on the lectern. “Let’s start again, shall we? Everybody write ‘The Second Law of Magic’ Come along, you in the secondhand jacket. This means you, too.”

Lukin slowly sat down and gingerly pulled out the little gold pen slotted into the back of the jeweled notebook. He opened the book, and its hinges sang a sweet golden note that made Wermacht frown. Carefully Lukin began to write neat black letters on the first small, crisp page.

The class went on and finished without further incident, except that everyone was shivering in the blasts of cold air from the open windows. When it was done, Wermacht picked up his hourglass and his papers and stalked out. Everyone relaxed.

“Who did that monkey?” was what everyone wanted to know as
they streamed out into the courtyard.

“Coffee,” Olga said plaintively from the midst of the milling students. “Surely we’ve got time for coffee now?”

“Yes,” Elda said, checking. “I need a straw to drink mine.”

They had coffee sitting on the steps of the refectory out of the wind, all six together. Somehow they had become a group after that morning.

“Do you know,” Felim said reflectively, “I do not find Wizard Wermacht at all likable. I most earnestly hope we see him no more than once a week.”

“No such luck,” said Olga, who had her crumpled timetable out on her knee. “We’ve got him again straight after lunch. He does Herbal Studies, too.”

“And Elementary Ritual tomorrow,” Elda discovered, pinning down her timetable with her right talons while she managed her straw and her coffee with her left. “That’s three times a week.”

Ruskin hauled his timetable out from under his mail and examined it glumly. “More than that. He does Demonology and Dragonlore, too. Man’s all over the place. Two sessions a week on Basic Magic.”

“He’s not likely to forget us, is he?” Lukin remarked, running his fingers over the smooth humps of the jewels in the golden notebook.

“Maybe he’s not vindictive,” Claudia suggested. “Just no sense of humor.”

“Want to bet?” grunted Ruskin. “Lukin, may I see that notebook a moment?”

“Sure,” said Lukin, handing it over. “I suppose, from his point of view, I was quite a trial to him, although he did seem to pick on people. Funny, though. When I first saw Wizard Corkoran, I thought he was the one I was going to hate. Stupid lightweight in silly clothes.”

“Oh, I do agree!” said Olga. “Such a poser!”

“But he fades to nothing beside Wizard Wermacht.” Felim agreed. “Necktie and all.”
“Oh, how can you talk like that about Wizard Corkoran!” Elda cried out. Her tail lashed the steps. “He’s sweet! I love him!”

They all stared at her. So did everyone else nearby. Elda’s voice was strong. Claudia said cautiously, “Are you sure, Elda?”

“Of course I’m sure! I’m in love!” Elda said vehemently. “I want to pick him up and carry him about!”

They looked at her. They thought about Wizard Corkoran grasped in Elda’s brawny, feathered arms, with his legs kicking and his tie trailing. Olga bit her lip. Lukin choked on his coffee, and Felim looked hard at the sky. Claudia, whose upbringing had forced her to think cautiously, remembered that Corkoran was a wizard and said, “Please don’t pick him up, Elda.”

“I wouldn’t dare,” Elda said regretfully. “It’s just he does so remind me of my old teddy bear that Flo plays with now. But I’ll be good. I’ll sigh about him and look at him. I just don’t want any of you criticizing him.”

“Fair enough.” Ruskin agreed. “You languish if you want. Thought is free. Here.” He passed the little notebook back to Lukin. “Take care of this. It’s dwarf work. Old, too. Some kind of virtue in it that I don’t know about. Treasure standard.”

“Then I’d better give it back,” Lukin said guiltily to Olga.

She looked extremely haughty. “Not at all. It was a gift.”

2

A week passed, which seemed like a month to Corkoran’s new students. They learned and did so much. They went to lectures delivered by Myrna, Finn, and other wizards. They wandered bewildered in the library, looking for the books Corkoran had told them to read, and even found some of them. They rushed from place to place, taking volumes of notes during the day, and in the evenings tried to write essays. The days seem to stretch enormously, so that they even had spare time, in which they
discovered various activities. Ruskin took up table tennis, quite fiendishly. Olga joined the Rowing Club, and got up at dawn every day to jog to the lake, from which she returned at breakfast time, ravenously hungry, looking more than ever like a hawk-faced queen, and so violently healthy that Claudia shuddered. Claudia was not good in the mornings. Her idea of a proper leisure activity was to join the University Choir, which met in the afternoons. Felim joined the fencing team. Lukin and Elda, who both looked athletic but were not, became members of the Chess Club and sat poring over little tables, facing one another for hours, when they should have been learning herbiaries or lists of dragons. Both were very good at chess, and each was determined to beat the other.

In that week it became increasingly evident that Lukin and Olga were a pair. They wandered about together hand in hand and sat murmuring together in corners. Except when she went rowing, Olga gave up wrapping her hair back in a scarf. Her friends at first thought that she had simply discovered she liked running her hands through its fine fair length, or tossing it about, until they noticed that Lukin at odd moments would put out a hand and lovingly stroke it. And when Lukin was not looking, Olga would stare admiringly at Lukin’s somber profile and broad shoulders. Possibly she lent him money, too. At any rate, Lukin soon appeared in a nearly new jacket and unpatched trousers, though this did not stop Wermacht calling him “you in the secondhand jacket.”

Wermacht, they discovered, made a point of never remembering students’ names. Ruskin was always either “you with the voice” or more often “you in the armor,” despite the fact that after the first day Ruskin had given up wearing armor. He now wore a tunic that, in Elda’s opinion, would have been too big even for Lukin but that stretched tight around his huge dwarfish chest, and trousers that seemed too small for Elda’s little brother Angelo. To make up for not wearing armor, Ruskin plaited twice the number of bones into his hair. As Claudia said, you knew he was near by the clacking.

None of the others exactly paired up at the time, though Ruskin was known to be sneaking off to the nearby Healers Hall to drink tea with a great, tall novice healer girl whom he had met in Herbal Studies—taught by Wizard Wermacht—for which the first-year
healers came over from their hall. Ruskin admired this young lady greatly, although he hardly came up to her waist. And for two days Felim took up with an amazingly beautiful first-year student called Melissa, whom he had met in Basic Magic—taught by Wermacht again—until the outcry from the others became extreme.

“I mean to say, Felim, she is just totally dumb!” Olga exclaimed.

Lukin agreed. “Wizard Policant’s statue has more sense.”

“She just stands and smiles,” Elda said vigorously. “She must have some brain, I suppose, or she wouldn’t be here, but I’ve yet to see it. What do you say, Claudia?”

“I’d say she smiled at whoever admitted her,” Claudia answered, thinking about it. “Wizard Finn probably. He’s a pushover for that kind of thing.”

“Truly?” Felim asked Claudia. “You think she is stupid?”

“Horribly,” said Claudia. “Hopelessly.”

Everyone tended to follow Claudia’s advice. Felim nodded sadly and saw less of Melissa.

Everyone learned the gossip around the University, too. Very soon it was no secret to them that Wizard Corkoran was obsessed with getting to the moon. Elda took to stationing herself where she could see Corkoran rushing to his moonlab with the latest lurid tie flapping over his shoulder. “Oh, I wish I could help him!” she said repeatedly, standing upright to wring her golden front talons together. “I want to help him get to the moon! He’s so sweet!”

“You need a griffin your own age,” Olga told her.

“There aren’t any,” said Elda. “Besides, I couldn’t pick a griffin up.”

For a while they all called Corkoran “Elda’s teddy bear.”

As for Corkoran himself, that week went past at the usual pace, or maybe faster than usual. There were so many crucial experimental spells going forward in his lab, and the construction of his moonship was going so slowly, that he grudged every minute of the four hours he spent teaching. Just getting to the moon was problem enough. He had still not worked out what you did for air
there either. But certain experiments had started suggesting that in airless space, soft things like human bodies were liable to come apart. Peaches certainly did. Corkoran that week imploded more peaches than he cared to think about. And peaches were beginning to be expensive now that autumn was coming on. The new load he ordered cost more than twice as much. Suppose, he wondered as he rushed along the corridors to teach his first-year group, suppose I were to give up using spells and just put an iron jacket around them? That would mean an iron jacket for me, too. I’d land on the moon looking like that dwarf Ruskin.

Here he ran full tilt into Wizard Myrna rushing the other way. Only a deft buffer spell from Myrna prevented either of them from getting hurt. Corkoran reeled against the wall, dropping books and papers.

“So sorry!” he gasped. “My head was away beyond the clouds.” He bent to pick up his papers. One of them was a list of his students that he had scribbled on for some reason. Oh, yes. He remembered now. And luckily Myrna was there, though looking a little shaken. “Oh, Myrna,” he said, “about those letters I asked you to send to the parents of new students…”

Myrna closed her eyes against Corkoran’s tie. It had shining green palm trees on it, somehow interlaced with scarlet bathing beauties. She had been suffering from morning sickness all that week, and she did not feel up to that tie. “Asking for money for the University,” she said. “Not to worry. I sent them all off the day after our meeting.”

“What? Every single one?” Corkoran said.

“Yes,” said Myrna. “We’d just had a big delivery of Wizard Derk’s brainy carrier pigeons, so there was no problem.” She opened her eyes. “Why are you looking so worried? Those birds always get where you tell them to go.”

“I know they do,” Corkoran said morbidly. “No, no. I’m not worried. It’s nothing. Really. Just a bit shaken. Are you all right? Good.” He went on his way feeling quite anxious. But there was so obviously nothing he could do to recall those letters that the feeling did not last. Before he had reached the end of that corridor,
Corkoran was telling himself that blood was thicker than water and that more than half those families were going to be so grateful to the University for telling them where their missing children were that they would probably send money, anyway. By the time he reached the tutorial room, he was back with the problem of the imploding peaches.

He could have given that tutorial standing on his head, he had done it so often. He collected the usual six essays on “What is wizards’ magic?” and went on to talk about the underlying theory of magic, most without thinking. He did notice, however, that his students seemed to have come on quite a bit, even after a mere week. They all joined in the discussion almost intelligently, except the griffin, who simply stared at him. Never mind. There was always one quiet one, though he would have expected that one to be the skinny girl, Claudia, and not the griffin. The piercing orange stare was unnerving. Nor did he understand when he happened to mention a teddy bear as an example of inert protective magic why all the students, even the griffin, fell about laughing. Still, it showed they were melding into a proper group. They accepted it, without difficulty, when he gave them the same essay to write all over again. He always did this. It saved having to think of another title, and it made them all think again. He was quite pleased as he hastened back to his lab to put peaches inside cannon-balls.

His students meanwhile streamed off with the rest of the first year to the North Lab, where they were shortly listening to Wizard Wermacht’s important footsteps and watching Wizard Wermacht stroke the little beard at the end of his long pink face while he gazed contemptuously around them all, ending with Lukin and Ruskin.

“No more deep holes, roaring, or monkeys today, I hope,” Wermacht said. He had said this at each class, sometimes twice a day, for the last week. Felim glowered, Olga made a small, impatient sound, Ruskin and Lukin ground their teeth, and Elda’s beak gave out a loud, grating crack. Claudia merely sighed. The rest of the students, as usual, shifted and muttered. It seemed to everyone as if Wermacht had been saying this for several years. “Notebooks out,” said Wermacht. “You’ll need rulers for diagrams
under your first big heading.”

Nobody had a ruler. They used pencils and the edges of desks rather than have another scene. So far they had got by without one by keeping as quiet as they could. But Lukin’s face was blanched with rage. Ruskin’s was deep pink, and he was muttering, “Oppression!” even before the top of the hourglass emptied and Wermacht’s heavy feet went striding away.

“Plain damn rudeness, I call it!” Lukin snarled as they pushed their way out into the courtyard. “I’m so busy keeping my temper that I haven’t time to learn anything!” Olga took his arm and patted it while she led the way across the courtyard for coffee. Olga drank coffee by the quart. She said she needed it to run in her veins. “And we’ve got the beastly man again this afternoon!” Lukin complained. He was soothed by Olga’s patting, but not by much.

“And in between comes lunch,” said Claudia, “which may even be worse than Wermacht.”

The rest groaned. Of all of them, Claudia probably suffered most from the truly horrible food provided by the refectory. She was used to the food that the Emperor ate and the exquisite, spicy waterweeds of the Marshes. But dwarfs ate delicately, too, Ruskin said, even the lower tribes; and, Felim added, so did the Emirates. Elda craved fresh fruit; Olga yearned for fresh fish. Lukin did not mind much. The poverty of Luteria made the food there very little better than the stuff from the refectory.

“But,” Lukin said, as they forced a way up the crowded refectory steps, “I would give my father’s kingdom for a properly baked oatcake.”

“Oatcake!” Claudia cried out, quite disgusted.

“Why not?” Olga asked. “There’s little to beat it if it’s made right.” Her northern accent came out very strongly as she said this. It always did on the few occasions when she spoke of anything to do with her home. “Find me a fire and a griddle, Claudia, and I’ll make you one.”

“Yes, please!” said Lukin.

It was one of those muggily warm autumn days. Every student in
the place seemed to be outside sitting on the refectory steps. Olga put their six cups of coffee on a tray and carried it over to the statue of Wizard Policant instead, where they all sat on his plinth except Elda, who spread herself out at their feet, alternately bending down to sip at her straw and raising her big golden beak to sniff the mushroom and wheat straw scent of autumn, carried in from beyond the town by the faint, muggy wind. Something in those scents excited her, she was not sure what, but it made her tail lash a little.

“A fire and a griddle,” Claudia said. “If I could do it unjinxed, I’d fetch you both, Olga. Why, with all this magical ability there is in this University, doesn’t anybody make the food at least taste better?”

“That’s an idea,” Ruskin grunted, banging his dangling heels against the plinth. “I’ll do it as soon as I learn how. Promise. Charcoal roast and mussels with garlic. How about that?”

“Newly caught trout with parsley butter,” Olga added yearningly.

“I’ve never had mussels,” said Elda. “Would I like them?”

“You’re bound to. Your beak looks made for opening shellfish,” said Felim.

“And chicken pie to follow,” said Claudia. “What pudding, do you think?”

“Claudia,” said lukin, “stop encouraging everyone to think of food and tell me how to deal with Wermacht. If he calls me ‘you with the secondhand jacket’ once more, I may find I’ve opened a mile-deep hole underneath him. I won’t be able to help myself.”

“And I might savage him”—Elda agreed—“next time he calls me an animal.”

“Let’s think.” Claudia leaned forward, with both bony hands clasped around one of her sharp knees. Her eyes took on a green glow of thought. In some queer Marshperson way, her hair seemed to develop a life of its own, each dark lock coiling and uncoiling on her shoulders. Everyone turned to her respectfully. They had learned that when Claudia looked like this, she was going to say something valuable. “I’ve heard,” she said, “that Wizard Wermacht
is the youngest tutor on the faculty, and I suspect he’s very proud of that. I think he’s rather sad.”

“Sad!” exclaimed Ruskin. His voice rose to such a hoot that students on the refectory steps jumped around to look. “I may cry!”

“Pitiful, I mean,” Claudia explained. “He swanks about with those heavy feet, thinking he’s so smart and clever, and he’s never even noticed that those other wizards make him teach all the classes. Why do you think we’re so sick of being taught by Wermacht? Because all the older ones know it’s hard, boring work hammering basics into first years and they let Wizard Wermacht do it because he’s too stupid to see it isn’t an honor. That’s what I mean by sad.”

“Hmm,” said Lukin. “You’ve got a point. But I don’t think it’ll hold me off forever.” A grin lit his heavy face, and he flung an arm around Olga. “If I get angry enough, I may tell him he’s being exploited.”

Olga leaned her face against Lukin’s shoulder. “Good idea.”

The rest watched with friendly interest, as they had done all week. Olga was extremely beautiful. Lukin was almost handsome. Both of them were from the north. It fitted. On the other hand, Lukin was a crown prince. All of them, even Ruskin, who was still having trouble grasping human customs, felt anxious for Olga from time to time. Elda had her beak open to ask, as tactfully as possible, what King Luther would think about Olga when they heard, quite mystifyingly, the sound of a horse’s hooves clopping echoingly through the courtyard. There was a great, admiring “O-o-oh!” from the refectory steps.

“Riding in here is illegal, isn’t it?” asked Felim.

Well-known smells filled Elda’s open beak. She clapped her beak shut and plunged around the statue, screaming. In the empty part of the courtyard beyond, a superb chestnut colt was just trotting to a halt and folding his great shining carroty wings as he did so. His rider waited for the huge pinions to be laid in order, before slinging both legs across one wing and sliding to the ground. He was a tall man with a wide, shambling sort of look. “Dad!” screamed Elda, and flung herself upon him. Derk steadied himself with several
often-used bracing spells and only reeled back slightly as he was engulfed in long golden feathers, with Elda’s talons gripping his shoulders and Elda’s smooth, cool beak rubbing his face.

“Lords!” said the horse. “Suppose I was to do that!”

“None of your cheek, Filbert,” Elda said over Derk’s shoulder. “I haven’t seen Dad for a week now. You’ve seen him every day. Dad, what are you doing here?”

“Coming to see how you were, of course,” Derk replied. “I thought I’d give you a week to settle down first. How are things?”

“Wonderful!” Elda said rapturously. “I’m learning so many things! I mean, the food’s awful, and one of the main teachers is vile, but they gave me a whole concert hall to sleep in because the other rooms are too small, and I’ve got friends, Dad! Come and meet my friends.”

She disentangled herself from Derk and dragged him by one arm across to the statue of Wizard Policant. Derk smiled and let himself be dragged. Filbert, who was a colt of boundless curiosity, clopped across after them and peered around the plinth as Elda introduced the others.

Derk shook hands with Olga and then with Lukin, whom he knew well. “Hallo, Your Highness. Does this mean your father’s allowed you to leave home after all?”

“No, not really,” Lukin admitted, rather flushed. “I’m financing myself, though. How are your flying pigs these days, sir?”

“Making a great nuisance of themselves,” said Derk, “as always.” He shook hands with Felim. “How do you do? Haven’t I met you before somewhere?”

“No, sir,” Felim said with great firmness.

“Then you must look like someone else I’ve met.” Derk apologized. He turned to Claudia. “Claudia? Good gods! You were a little shrimp of a girl when I saw you last! Living in the Marshes with your mother. Do you remember me at all?”

Claudia’s face lit with her happiest and most deeply dimpled smile. “I do indeed. You landed outside our dwelling on a beautiful
black horse with wings.”

“Beauty. My grandmother,” Filbert put in, with his chin on Wizard Policant’s pointed shoes.

“I hope she’s still alive,” said Claudia.

“Fine, for a twelve-year-old,” Filbert told her. “She doesn’t speak as well as me. Mara mostly rides her these days.”

“No, I remember I could hardly understand her,” said Claudia. “She looked tired. So did you,” she said to Derk. “Tired and worried.”

“Well, I was trying to be Dark Lord in those days,” Derk said, “and your mother’s people weren’t being very helpful.” He turned to Ruskin. “A dwarf, eh? Training to be a wizard. That has to be a first. I don’t think there’s been a dwarf wizard ever.”

Ruskin gave a little bow from where he sat. “That is correct. I intend to be the first one. Nothing less than a wizard’s powers will break the stranglehold the forgemasters have on Central Peaks society.”

Derk looked thoughtful. “I’ve been trying to do something about that. The way things are run there now is a shocking waste of dwarf talents. But those forgemasters of yours are some of the most stiff-necked, flinty-hearted, obstinate fellows I know. I tell you what—you come to me when you’re qualified and we’ll try to work something out.”

“Really?” Ruskin’s round face beamed. “You mean that?”

“Of course, or I wouldn’t have said it,” said Derk. “One thing Querida taught me is that revolutions need a bit of planning. And that reminds me—”

Elda had been towering behind her father, delighted to see him getting on so well with her friends. Now she flung both feathered forelegs around his shoulders, causing him to sag a bit. “You really don’t mind me being here? You’re going to let me stay?”

“Well.” Derk disengaged himself and sat on the plinth beside Filbert’s interested nose. “Well, I can’t deny that Mara and I had a bit of a set-to over it, Elda. It went on some days, in fact. Your mother pointed out that you had the talent and were at an age
Year of the Griffin is a sequel to the humorous Dark Lord of Derkholm, which depicts a fantastic world devastated for forty years by tourists from another universe. In the sequel, which begins eight years later, Jones spoofs higher education by exploring fallen standards and power plays at poverty-stricken Wizards' University. Jones depicts the rollicking adventures of six first-year students enrolled at the university, among them the griffin Elda of Dark Lord of (read more from the Short Guide). Study Pack. The Year of the Griffin Study Pack contains: Year of the Griffin Short Guide. Year of the Griffin is a sequel to the humorous Dark Lord of Derkholm, which depicts a fantastic world devastated for forty years by tourists from another universe. In the sequel, which begins eight years later, Jones spoofs higher education by exploring fallen standards and power plays at poverty-stricken Wizards' University. Jones depicts the rollicking adventures of six first-year students enrolled at the university, among them the griffin Elda of Dark Lord of Derkholm. The students are enrolled without the knowledge of disapproving family members or hostile factions back home. When t