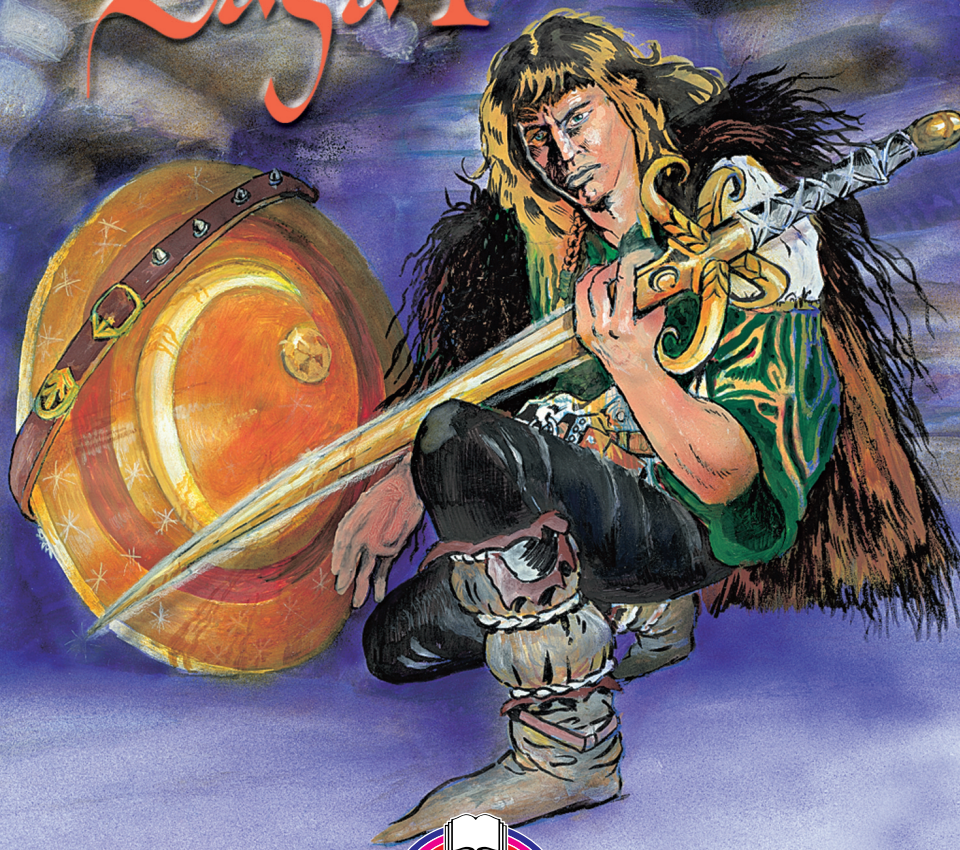


# The Golden Stone Saga I

Jenny Dooley



**Express Publishing**

# *Imprisoned*

“Here you are, scum.”

The jailer brought in two bowls of awful smelling food, which he put in front of the prisoners.

“Enjoy it. It’s the last food you’ll ever eat.”

“Er ... you forgot the salt.”

The jailer turned to the scarred man angrily.

“Don’t try to be funny, Shivan. In fact, don’t talk. Eat that slop and that is all. If I hear you talk again, I’ll cut your tongue out.”

With that, the jailer left the dungeon and locked the door.

Will and Shivan began talking again, but very quietly so as not to annoy the jailer.

“Actually, this ‘food’ would taste better without the use of a tongue.”

Will nodded in agreement.

“So who are you, Shivan?”

“Up until yesterday, I was General Shivan. I had been General Shivan for more than four years. I served Ddraig more loyally than any other man. And now I’ve ended up in here – another lamb for the slaughter.”

“Had you made him angry?”

“No, I’d done nothing. It seems that Ddraig often decides to sacrifice his most valuable men. I only found that out yesterday.”

“Why would he do such a thing?”

“Well, for one thing, he thinks that executing someone so important will make his god even more pleased with him. And for another, it means that he’ll always be in command of young, athletic generals, because none of us have the chance to grow old. But I think that there’s another reason. I think he does it to make sure that no one powerful will ever betray him – they’ll be dead before they can even think about doing so.”

“Who is this ‘god’ you spoke of?”

“Scareth The Destroyer – Lord of chaos, of suffering and of all black thoughts.”

“Do you worship him?”

“I used to.”

“When did you stop?”

“Yesterday.”

Shivan went on to tell Will all about the following day’s execution of the traitors that was to take place and, although his cellmate certainly seemed familiar, never once did Will recognise him as the man he saw fighting with his mother all those years ago. He didn’t know that it was this man’s knife that finally cut her throat. Nor did he realise that the scars were caused by the hot broth his mother had thrown on his face.

Eventually, the conversation switched to Ddraig himself and the secret of his power. This made Will very curious and Shivan very excited. His voice grew louder with each sentence.

“King Ddraig wears a medallion around his neck. It was given to him by a sorceress called Vira. He put it on when he was forty years old, and he has remained at that age ever since. That was over a hundred years ago. If the medallion is removed, his strength will leave him and he will ‘melt’ away. Without that medallion, the mighty Ddraig is nothing!”





# The Golden Stone Saga I

*Having heard the noises from within the tavern,  
Will left the safety of the hut and crept towards a hole  
in the tavern wall ...*

*He could no longer see his father but he saw his  
mother and, as she struggled with the furious Shivan,  
she caught sight of her son through the hole.*

*“Run, Will!”*

*“But ...!”*

*“Forget about us! Save yourself!”*

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