

The Sea King's Lady
A Seven Kingdoms Tale 2



By S. E. Smith

Acknowledgments

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—S.E. Smith

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Paranormal Romance

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Summary: A young woman searching for her missing friend tries to save the life of a young boy only to find herself in a magical underwater kingdom in a far off world.

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Excerpt:

“You would totally hate this, Carly. You’d be ready to pack it in and head back home, call in for a pizza delivery, and try to decide if you should watch Dragonheart for the millionth time. God, I miss you and the way we could laugh together,” Jenny murmured, staring out at the rocks. “Please, wherever you are, I hope you are happy.”

A sense of peace washed through Jenny. In her own way, she was saying goodbye. It might not be closure, but it was as close as she could find to it. Releasing a deep breath, she turned to the left and started walking again. She paused twenty feet down the beach when a brilliant sparkle near the water’s edge caught her attention. Bending, she picked up the unusual stone half buried in the sand and seaweed. She straightened and gazed down at the colorful swirls embedded in the surface. She rolled the smooth, cold stone in her hand, studying the vibrant lines running through it. Her fingers slowly tightened around the sea-polished gem that looked more like a priceless jewel rather than an unusual shell or piece of colorful sea glass that she often collected. Pausing again, she turned her gaze back out at the ocean.

Jenny closed her eyes and muttered a silent wish as she listened to the sounds of the waves, the birds, and the wind. She really did love the ocean, it was the one thing she missed the most besides Carly since her move to the suburbs of Portland.

She had spent just about every weekend coming here to swim, surf, hunt for shells and sea glass, or just enjoy the sounds of it. Carly had thought she was nuts and suggested they move to someplace like Florida or Hawaii, where at least the water was warmer, but Jenny hadn't minded the cold. A dry suit and vigorous exercise were enough to keep her warm, even on a chilly day like today.

Jenny drew in a deep breath, enjoying the smell of the moist, chilly air as it coursed down into her lungs. A frown furrowed her brow when an unusual, foreign sound rose above the natural cadence of the waves. Her lips twisted in irritation when the sound of a child's laugh pulled her out of her reverie.

Opening her eyes, she turned in time to see a young boy, no more than seven or eight, running toward the water not more than a dozen feet from where she was standing. She frowned when he didn't stop at the edge of it, but plod forward into the rolling waves. She started forward in concern, scanning the beach for his parents or another adult, but the area was empty.

"Hey! Stop!" Jenny yelled. She shoved the rock she had found in her front pocket before she took a step forward and held her hand out in warning. "Hey, you! Boy! Kid! Stop!"

The boy paused and glanced at her with wide, mischievous eyes before he grinned and dove forward under the next wave. Jenny didn't stop to think. She kept her eyes glued on the tousled, white-blond head. Her summers as a lifeguard kicked in.

Shrugging out of her jacket, she let it fall to the ground behind her as she started running. Her tennis shoes would be a problem. She could kick them off once she hit the water. A part of her was concerned that her shirt and jeans would hinder her, but she didn't have time to strip out of them if she was going to reach the boy in time. Fear added to her adrenaline as she hit the water. At the same time as the water closed around her thighs, she saw a flash of brightly colored hair close to the surface. The boy turned to look at her, amusement and something else in his eyes. He smiled at her one more time before he slipped beneath the surface.

Jenny dove beneath the wave as it rolled over her. Kicking her legs out, she swept her arms out and cupped her hands to pull her forward. She caught a glimpse of green when the sun broke through a cloud and shone down. The boy had been wearing green trousers and nothing else. Hope built inside her as she swam harder than she had ever swum before. She ignored the burning in her lungs as long as she could, afraid that if she surfaced for air she would lose sight of the boy.

Frustration rose in her when the boy remained just out of reach. Unable to continue, Jenny rose to the surface and drew in a deep breath. She ignored the freezing water. Panic began to sweep through her when she realized that the boy had not come up for air. Diving down, she struck out in the direction that she had last seen him.

The water was deeper here, well over her head and she knew there was little chance the boy would survive even if he knew how to swim. Already, Jenny could feel the cold threatening to pull her down into the inky darkness. If not for the adrenaline and fear for the boy, she would have given up and returned to shore while she still could. Ignoring the stiffness in her limbs, she pushed downward. Her burning eyes caught sight of the boy a short distance in front of her. A sense of renewed determination filled her. She would NOT let him drown!

Just a little more, Jenny whispered to herself as she frantically kicked her legs. You can do it.

Jenny reached out her right arm, trying to grab the boy's foot. She didn't know how the kid could hold his breath so long or swim so fast. Her fingers skimmed the tips of his toes, startling him. She jerked her hand back when he suddenly turned and looked at her. Blinking, she paused when he pointed at a dark recess in a rocky surface. Her eyes involuntarily followed his arm before darting back to him. A small stream of bubbles escaped past her lips when he motioned for her to follow him.

Shaking her head, she started to reach for him when he twisted away. A low cry of dismay resonated through her when she saw him disappear into the hole in the rock. Surging forward, she frantically grabbed at his foot again, missing it by just less than a finger's width. Jenny gripped the rough edge of the rock and pulled herself forward until her head was just inside the narrow opening.

Her eyes widened when she saw a colorful kaleidoscope of water swirling in front of her. She barely caught a glimpse of the boy as he passed through it and disappeared. Unsure of what was going on, she gripped the rocky entrance to the cave with one hand while she reached out with the other to touch the colorful abnormality. The moment her fingers skimmed across the surface, she felt her body being pulled forward. A silent scream ripped from her as she was sucked forward into the whirlpool of color.

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