



The Seer and the Sword by Victoria Hanley

Subject: Fantasy

Book Lists: Gifted, Middle School, Reluctant Readers

Props: Crystal ball



The magical sword of Bellandra was well known throughout the kingdoms. For centuries, it had kept Bellandra, a kingdom of peace and artistry, safe from warring kings. The sword was reputed to be able to stand against any foe. However, neighboring King Kareed was intent on expanding his borders and he did not fear the legend of the sword. King Kareed and his guards ruthlessly rode into the kingdom of Bellandra, found little resistance, quickly killed the king, stole the sword and conquered its people.

King Kareed returned to his home, the Kingdom of Archeld, to celebrate his victory and to hide the sword of Bellandra. News of the king's triumphant return soon swept through his lands. The King's daughter, Princess Torina, jumped to her horse and galloped to meet her father. He swept her off her horse and they embraced. Then the king reached into his saddlebag, smiled at his daughter, and gave her a gift. (*Bring out crystal ball*)

"This is for you," the king said.

He put a crystal sphere in her palm. Torina held it up to the sun. Inside the crystal, light swam, and brightened.

"It's lovely," she replied.

Suddenly a guard rode up and delivered news to the king. The king's smile faded. He handed Torina to one of his officers and galloped away to the castle. Torina sat very still, confused and blinking. She stared at the crystal, rotating it in her hand. She brought it close to her face and gasped. She saw her mother's face in the crystal. Her mother, who was pregnant, was not well. Torina leaped to her horse, drove her heels into its flanks and followed her father. Torina's vision had been correct. Her mother

was ill, she was in premature labor, she gave birth to a stillborn son.

The kingdom mourned the loss of their king's son. As Torina stood with her father in sadness, his hand closed over hers and upon the crystal sphere. It reminded him of another gift. (*Put down crystal ball*) He called for it to be brought forth. A young boy of thirteen with his hands tied together and eyes cast down appeared.

The king said, "This is a prisoner from Bellandra, the son of the king who is no more. His name is Landen and he will make you a fine slave." He gave the boy to Torina.

"Cut his ropes, please," the princess replied with her chin raised. "I have never had a slave and I never will. You gave him to me father and I set him free."

The king was furious, but his love for Torina persuaded him to swallow his anger and agree that the boy could be set free.

Landen, the son of a gentle king, vowed vengeance on his father's killer—King Kareed. Landen would stay and learn to fight from the very man who deserved his hatred. He swore to himself that he would find the hidden Sword of Bellandra, his sword, and he would someday wield it against his enemies.

Torina, the daughter of a warring king and a seer, could see the future with her crystal. Would she see Landen's intentions? Would she see the death, betrayal, hatred, and love that waited for them all? Their fate lies here for you to see in (*Hold up book*) *The Seer and the Sword* by Victoria Hanley.

