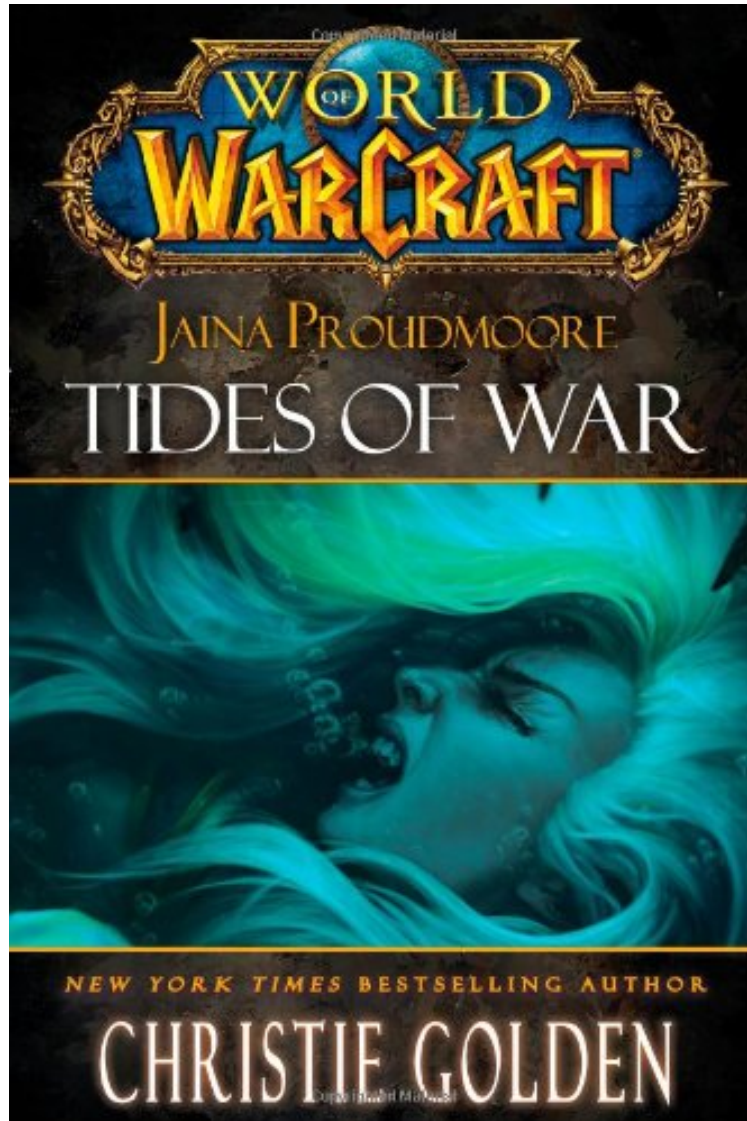


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Christie Golden

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Christie Golden : World of Warcraft: Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised World of Warcraft: Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. the book spent a bit too much time exploring the emotional depths of the characters and creating love in unexpected places By PeppilinI purchased this book as something to read while on vacation. It served its purpose as being entertaining and at times I didnt want to put it down. The battles are captivating and played out vividly in my mind as I worked my way through chapter after chapter. However, to me, the book spent a bit too much time exploring the emotional depths of the characters and creating love in unexpected places. There was

certainly room for those things but they seemed to take over the story line, even outweighing many of the definitive battles that the story was building up to. Also, the ending seemed a bit of a let down. There was all of this build up, all of this anticipation, and then the book just wrapped up leaving far too many things unfinished. It felt like this book should have only been "part 1" of a two book series. But to my knowledge...there is no "part 2" book. So, while the book overall was very good and I have been left hungry for more, I am also dissatisfied and feeling as if I just spent a whole lot of time reading a very incomplete story. Even so, it is still an entertaining and enjoyable book and while it may not be the best warcraft novel out there, it is still worth reading on a rainy day.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **LORE and MORE** By Lisa Leavitt Every person has different likes and dislikes but for me Christie Golden is the writer I prefer for World of Warcraft lore. She keeps a great line in the development of the characters and the story creating heroes and villains with more than just the clang clang of the weapons and roar of testosterone. With mystery, a tiny touch of romance here and there, some humor and just enough details of the environment that the reader can fill in the blanks and see the story in their mind. Easy to follow the story yet complex. I truly enjoyed the reading.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **Great Read** By Cat This book was quite interesting and I believe the events in the book led up to Lady Jaina becoming what she is today, so I believe anyone who might be curious as to what happened to the once Theramore ruler to send her off the deep end should definitely get their hands on this book, Christie Golden is a brilliant writer and I love her warcraft novels that she writes

The New York Times bestselling author of *The Shattering* and *Thrall: Twilight of the Aspects* delivers a sensational tie-in to the newest World of Warcraft game expansion. Nothing is free, Goel, Jaina Proudmoore said. Your knowledge and skills were bought at a cost. The . . . orc you left behind in your place had done much harm in your absence. If I have heard about what is going on in Orgrimmar and Ashenvale, surely you must have! Goels mien, which had been deeply peaceful, now looked troubled. I have heard, of course. And . . . you do nothing? I have another path, he said. You have seen the results of that path. A threat that Goel, I hear this, but now that task is over. Garrosh is stirring up trouble between the Alliance and the Horde. Trouble that didn't exist until he started it. I can understand if you don't wish to undermine him publicly, but perhaps you and I can work together. Form a summit of sorts. Ask Baine to join us; I know he has no love for what Garrosh is striving for. I could speak with Varian. As of late, he seems to be more reachable. Everyone respects you, even in the Alliance, Goel. You have earned that respect because of your actions. Garrosh has earned nothing but mistrust and hatred because of his. She indicated her cloak, which had blown about with the wind he had sent to bear her to shore. You can control the winds as a shaman. But the winds of war are blowing, and if we do not stop Garrosh now, many innocents will pay the price for our hesitation. *** The ashes of the Cataclysm have settled across Azeroth's disparate kingdoms. As the broken world recovers from the disaster, the renowned sorceress Lady Jaina Proudmoore continues her long struggle to mend relations between the Horde and the Alliance. Yet of late, escalating tensions have pushed the two factions closer to open war, threatening to destroy what little stability remains in the . . . Dark news arrives in Jaina's beloved city, Theramore. One of the blue dragonflight's most powerful artifacts, the Focusing Iris, has been stolen. To unravel the item's mysterious whereabouts, Jaina works with the former blue Dragon Aspect Kalecgos. The two brilliant heroes forge an unlikely bond during their investigation, but another disastrous turn of events looms on the horizon. . . . Garrosh Hellscream is mustering the Horde's armies for an all-out invasion of Theramore. Despite mounting dissent within his faction, the brazen warchief aims to usher in a new era of Horde domination. His thirst for conquest leads him to take brutal measures against anyone who dares question his leadership. Alliance forces converge on Theramore to repel the Horde onslaught, but the brave defenders are unprepared for the true scope of Garrosh's cunning and deceptive strategy. His attack will irrevocably transform Jaina, engulfing the ardent peacekeeper in the chaotic and all-consuming . . . **TIDES OF WAR**

About the Author New York Times bestselling and award-winning author Christie Golden has written more than thirty-five novels and several short stories in the fields of science fiction, fantasy, and horror. Among her many projects are over a dozen Star Trek novels and several original fantasy novels. An avid player of World of Warcraft, she has written two manga short stories and several novels in that world (*Lord of the Clans*, *Rise of the Horde*, *Arthas: Rise of the Lich King*, and *The Shattering: Prelude to Cataclysm*, and *Thrall: Twilight of the Aspects*), with more in the works. She has also written the *StarCraft Dark Templar Saga: Firstborn*, *Shadow Hunters*, and *Twilight*, as well as the most recent hardcover, *Devils Due*. Golden is also the writer of three books in the major nine-book Star Wars series *Fate of the Jedi* (in collaboration with Aaron Allston and Troy Denning). Golden lives in Colorado. She welcomes visitors to her website: ChristieGolden.com. 2012 Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Jaina Proudmoore *Tides of War 1* The hour was close to twilight, and the vaguely warm hues of the afternoon were fading to colder blues and purples. Air peppered with swirling, stinging blades of snow whirled high above Coldarra. Other beings would shiver and shield their eyes, fluff their fur or feathers, or wrap themselves more tightly in their cloaks. The great blue dragon whose wings beat a slow rhythm paid no heed to such things as snow or cold. He had taken to the air in search of the crisp bite of the frigid, snow-speckled wind, hoping, perhaps futilely, that it would cleanse his thoughts and soothe his spirit. Kalecgos, though young as dragons reckoned

age, had already borne witness to tremendous change among his people. The blue dragons had endured so very much, it seemed to him. They had twice lost their beloved Aspect, Malygos once to insanity for millennia, and then finally to death. Ironically, and poignantly, the bluesthe intellectuals and the guardians of arcane magic in the world of Azeroth were the flight most drawn to order and calmness, and the least able to deal with such chaos. Yet even in the midst of this upheaval, their hearts had stayed true. The spirit of the blue dragonflight had chosen not the hard-line path represented by Malygos deceased blood heir, Arygos, but the gentler, more joyful way offered to them by Kalecgos. And that choice had proved to be the right one. Arygos had in actuality been betraying the flight, not striving to be a devoted caretaker. He had promised to deliver his people to the evil and quite insane dragon Deathwing, once they had sworn to follow Arygos. Instead, the blues had joined with the reds, greens, and bronzes and one unique orco to help bring down that great monster. But as Kalecgos flew across the darkening sky, the snow below turning lavender, he knew that with that victory, the flights, in a way, had also sacrificed themselves. The Aspects were no more, though the dragons who had once been Aspects lived on. The defeat of Deathwing had demanded all they could give, and at the end of that battle, though Alexstrasza, Nozdormu, Ysera, and Kalecgos still survived, their Aspect abilities were gone poured into the final moment of the struggle. The Aspects had been made for this single act. With it accomplished, they had fulfilled their destinies. There was a less direct effect as well. The flights had always had a surety about their roles, a firm understanding of their purpose. But now that the moment for which they had been created had come and gone what purpose was left to them? Many blues had already departed. Some had sought his blessing before leaving the Nexus Kalecgos continued to be their leader, although the powers of an Aspect were no longer his. They had told him that they were restless and wished to see if there was some other place in the world where their skills and abilities would be appreciated. The rest had simply gone present one day, vanished the next. Those who remained were either becoming increasingly agitated or surrendering to a bleak sense of malaise. Kalecgos dove and wheeled, letting the cold air caress his scales, then opening his wings and catching an updraft, his thoughts once again brooding and unhappy. For so long, even during Malygos insanity, the blues had had direction. The question of what to do now had been thought and sometimes whispered. Kalecgos could not help but wonder if he had somehow failed his flight. Had they really been better under the leadership of an insane Aspect? The immediate answer was of course not, and yet and yet. He closed his eyes, not against the needle-sharp snow, but in pain. Their hearts trusted me to lead them. I believe I did lead them well then, but now? Where do blue dragons any dragons fit in a world where the Hour of Twilight has been prevented but only an endless night looms before us? He felt utterly alone. He had always deemed himself perhaps the oddest choice possible to lead the blue dragonflight, as he had never really felt like a typical blue dragon. As he flew, despondent and increasingly concerned, he realized that there was at least one who understood him better than most. He leaned to the right, angling his great form slightly, and flapped his wings, heading back toward the Nexus. He knew where he would find her. Kirygos, daughter of Malygos, clutch sister to Arygos, sat in her human form on one of the magical, luminous floating platforms that encircled the Nexus. She wore only a long, loose dress, and her blue-black hair was not braided. Her back was against one of the shining, silver-white trees that dotted a few of the platforms. Above her, blue dragons wheeled as they had for centuries, ceaselessly patrolling, although there seemed to be no threat here, not anymore. Kirygos appeared to pay them no heed, her gaze soft and unfocused. She appeared lost in thought, though what occupied her mind, Kalecgos did not know. She did turn to look at him as he drew closer, smiling a little as she realized he was not one of the guardians of the flights home. He landed on the platform and assumed his half-elven shape. Kirygos smile widened and she held out a hand to him. He kissed it affectionately and plopped down beside her, extending his long legs and folding his arms behind his head in an effort at nonchalance. Kalec, she said warmly. Come to my pondering place? Is that what this is? For me, yes. The Nexus is my home, so I dont like to go too far, but it can be challenging to be alone inside. She turned to face him. So I come here, and I ponder. Just as you seem to want to do. Kalec sighed, realizing that his effort at casualness was lost on this perceptive friend he often thought of as a sister. I was flying, he said. You cannot fly away from your duties, or your thoughts, Kirygos replied gently, reaching to squeeze his arm. You are our leader, Kalec. And you have guided us well. Arygos would have destroyed the flight and the whole world with it. Kalec frowned, remembering the dire vision that Ysera, the former green Dragon Aspect, had shared with them all not so long ago. It was the Hour of Twilight and showed an Azeroth in which all life was wiped out. From the grass and the insects to orcs, elves, humans, creatures of air and sea and land, to the mighty Aspects themselves, who had each been slain by his or her own unique powers. Deathwing had died then, too, along with the rest of Azeroth impaled like a grotesque trophy on the spire of Wyrmsrest Temple itself. Kalecgos shuddered, disturbed even now by the memory of Yseras lilting but broken voice relaying the vision. He would have done that, Kalec said, agreeing with part of her statement but not all of it. Her blue eyes searched his. Dear Kalec, she said, you have always been different. Humor flickered in him despite his dark mood, and he made a silly face, twisting his handsome half-elven features. Kirygos laughed. You see? Different is not always a good thing, he said. It is who you are, and it is because you were different that the flight chose you. The humor melted away and he regarded her somberly. But, my dear Kirygos, he said sadly, do you think the flight would choose me again, now? Truth had ever been one of Kirygosas most cherished ideals. She looked at him, searching for an answer that was both true and comforting, and not finding it. Kalecs heart sank. If this

beloved friend, his sweet sister of the spirit, had no encouragement to offer, then his fears were more real than he had suspected. What I do think is He would never know what she thought, for they were interrupted by a sudden terrible sound the cries of blue dragons in despair and anguish. More than a dozen dragons were emerging from the Nexus, flying and diving about erratically. One of them abruptly swerved from his fellows, heading straight for Kalecgos. Kalec leaped to his feet, blood draining from his face. Kiry stood beside him, hand to her mouth. Lord Kalecgos! Narygos cried. We are ruined! All is lost! What has happened? Slow down, speak calmly, my friend! said Kalec, although his own heart lurched within his chest at the sheer panic and terror emanating from Narygos. The other dragon was usually calm and had been one of the more open-minded blues during the tense time when Kalec and Arygos were vying for the role of Aspect. To see him so distraught alarmed Kalecgos. The Focusing Iris! It is gone! Gone? What do you mean? It has been stolen! Kalec stared at him, sick with horror, his mind reeling. Not only was the Focusing Iris an item of immense arcane power, but it was also deeply precious to the blues. It had belonged to them for as long as anyone could remember. Like many such items, it was neither good nor evil in itself but could be turned to both benevolent and sinister purposes. And it had been used so. In the past, it had diverted the arcane energy of Azeroth and to animate a hideous creature that should never have drawn breath. To think it was now lost to them, lost and being controlled by those who might use its power This is exactly why we moved it, Kalecgos murmured. Not two days ago, in an effort to avoid this very circumstance, Kalecgos, along with several others, had recommended moving the Focusing Iris out of the Eye of Eternity and into a secret hiding place. He recalled his argument to the blues: Many of our secrets are already known, and more of our flight leaves each day. There will be those who will be emboldened by this. The Nexus has been violated before, and the Focusing Iris used for dark purposes. We need to keep it safe and if much of Azeroth knows by now that the Nexus hosts this artifact, then it is certain that one day, it will again be vulnerable. And that day had come, but not how Kalec had anticipated. The blues had decided that a small group would bear it into the Frozen Sea, off the coast of Coldarra, where it would be safely he had thought consigned in enchanted ice. It would be securely hidden, a simple chunk of frozen water that was in reality so much more. Kalec struggled for calm. What makes you think its been stolen? Please, he thought, begging what power he did not know, please, let this be simple confusion. We have heard nothing from Veragos or the others, and the Focusing Iris is not where it should be. Some of the blues, those who had spent the most time with the artifact over the long centuries, were particularly attuned to it. Kalecgos had asked them to sense its progress. By this point, the Focusing Iris should have been on the bottom of the ocean, heavily warded, and those who had borne it there should have been back. There were other possibilities not nearly as dire, but Kalecgos was already in his dragon form and flying quickly to the Nexus, with Kirygos and Narygos right behind him. Because he knew how, he did not understand that the other possibilities were nothing but false hopes. And that two of the worst disasters to befall the blue dragonflight had happened while he had been first its Aspect and then its leader for only a few brief months. Kalecgos landed inside the cold, cavernous interior of the Nexus to utter chaos. Everyone seemed to be talking at once. Every line of their massive reptilian bodies screamed fear and anger. Some sat hunched and unnaturally still, and these alarmed Kalecgos even more. How few of them were left, he thought; how few had stayed, and no doubt these few wished they, too, had departed ere this doom had come upon them. Retaining his true form, he called for silence. Only a handful obeyed. The rest continued to shout among themselves. How could this have happened? We should have sent more; I told you we should have sent more! This was a fools idea in the first place. Had it remained here, we could have watched it every moment! Kalecgos slammed his tail on the ground. Silence! he bellowed, the single word ringing through the chamber. The flight ceased talking at once, all heads whipping around to regard their leader. Kalec saw in several of their expressions a faint flicker of hope that this was some kind of mistake and that he would somehow make everything right. Others fixed baleful, sullen eyes on him, clearly blaming him for what had transpired. Once he had their full attention, Kalecgos began to speak. Let us first determine what we know to be true, not engage in wild speculation, he said. The blue flight does not surrender to fears born of a fevered imagination. Some of them lowered their heads at that, their ears drooping slightly in shame. Others bridled. Kalec would deal with them later. He had to establish the facts. I sensed it first, said Teralygos. He was one of the oldest of the blues who had chosen to stay. Once, he had sided with Kalecs rival, Arygos. Since the revelation of Arygoss betrayal and his subsequent death, however, Teralygos and most of the others had maintained their loyalty to Kalec, even after his Aspect abilities had been lost. Long have you been a guardian of our home, Teralygos, and great are the thanks all of us owe you, Kalec said, his voice full of respect. What did you sense? The path that Veragos and the others were to take was not arrow straight, Teralygos said. Kalec nodded. It had been decided that it would be too obvious to see several blue dragons bearing a mysterious object, flying straight for their goal. Instead, they had opted to travel in bipedal form. It was slower and more roundabout but would attract much less notice from any hostile forces. And if they were indeed attacked while on the ground, it would be the work of a blink of an eye to shift from humanoid-seeming to their true forms. Five dragons should have been more than a match for anyone who might be skulking about, thinking to ambush what appeared to be a simple caravan. And yet I knew every twist and turn of the route, Teralygos said, continuing. I and others Alagosa and Banagos we followed each step our brothers and sisters took. And until barely an hour ago, all was well. His voice, raspy with age, cracked on the last word. Kalec kept his gaze fastened on Teralygos but felt Kirygosas

head brush against his shoulder in a gentle reassurance. What happened then? Then they halted. Before this, progress had not ceased for a moment. And after a pause, they began to move again, but not west, not to the Frozen Sea southwest, at a speed far faster than the Iris had been moving before. Where was it when it stopped? At the shores of the sea. Now it has traveled far to the south. And the farther it travels from me, Teralygos said miserably, the less I can sense it. Kalecgos looked at Kirygososa. Take someone with you and go to the shoreline. Be careful. Find out what happened there. She nodded, spoke to Banagos and Alagosa, and a moment later all three were airborne, broad wingbeats carrying them out of the Nexus. By air, it was a short distance away. They would not be gone long. He hoped. Oh no, Kirygososa whispered. She hesitated for a moment, hovering, trying to anticipate any possible lurking threat. She sensed nothing. The enemy was long gone. Only what they had wrought remained. She folded her wings and dropped gracefully to the ground, bending her long, sinuous neck in grief. The site had once been a plain, if unwelcoming, unmarred expanse of whitepure, clean, calming in its simplicity. The visitor would see nothing but snow, or the occasional brown-gray of rock. In some places, small patches of yellowish sand stretched into the hungry, cold ocean. The snow had been turned to red slush. There were violent black gashes that looked as if lightning strikes had rent the frozen soil, which the whiteness had once blanketed. Boulders had been ripped from the ground or snapped off the faces of the cliffs and hurled great distances. Some of the boulders, too, were tinged with drying crimson. As Kirygososa and the others sniffed the air, they caught the lingering stench of demonic activity, the coppery reek of blood, and the unique, indescribable fragrance of myriad other magics. More mundane weapons had been used as well; her sharp eyes caught wounds in the earth that had been made by spears, and here and there arrows had buried themselves up to their fletching. The lesser races, growled Banagos. Her heart aching, Kirygososa did not chide him for the insulting words as she might otherwise have done. He was right, although so far it was impossible to tell exactly which ones, or even which faction they bore allegiance to. Kirygososa transformed into her human form. Tucking a lock of long, blue-black hair behind an ear, she respectfully approached the bodies of her slain kin. Five had started out, to protect the Focusing Iris. Five had been killed, giving their lives attempting to complete their task. Mild-tempered and wise Uragos, older than the others, the leader of the group. Rulagos and Rulagososa, clutch mates, appearing in human form as twins. They had fallen together, close to each other and in the same pose, arrows piercing their throats as similar in death as in life. Tears filled her eyes as Kirygososa turned to regard Pelagososa. Kiry could recognize Pelagososa only by her petite size. She had always been among the smallest of the blues, young (as the dragons reckoned such things) but having a gift with the arcane that surpassed her years. Whoever slew her had also fought with magic, and she was burned beyond recognition. Lurugos had perhaps resisted the hardest, given how far away from the murder site they found his body. Scorched, frozen, partially submerged, with arrows sticking out like quills in his shoulders and legs, he had not given up. Kirygososa thought that he might have even fought for a heartbeat or two after his head had been severed from his shoulders in a clean strike from a sharp sword. Banagos, in human shape, came behind her and squeezed her arm. Swiftly she covered his hand with her own. I know little of the lesser races, Banagos said. I see all kinds of weapons here and evidence that magic was used demonic and arcane both. It could be any race, Kiry said. Then perhaps we were on the right track with the idea of killing them all, Banagos said. His voice was raw with grief, and his blue eyes were reddened with unshed tears. He had loved little Pelagososa, and they would have been mates once she had come of age. No, said Kiry sharply. Such has ever been the sentiment of those who do not take time to think, Banagos, as I know you know. As I know Pelagososa always believed. They do not all do this, any more than all dragons attack wantonly and slay the younger races for sport. We understand why this was done. And it was not for hatred of our people. It was because someone wished to obtain the Focusing Iris for his or her own purposes. Five dragons, breathed Alagososa. Five of us. Five of our finest. Who could possibly be strong enough to do this? That, said Kiry, is what we need to find out. Banagos, return to the Nexus with this grim news. Alagososa and I will stay here and care for the remains of our fallen. She had thought to spare him further pain, but Banagos shook his head. No. She would have been my mate. I will tend to her. And the others. You are closest to Kalecgos. It is best that he hear this from you, and quickly. As you wish, said Kiry gently. She looked one final time at the bodies of the blue dragons, trapped in death in a form most of them scorned; closed her eyes in sorrow once more; then leaped skyward. Her wings flapped as she wheeled and turned back for the Nexus. Her thoughts were no longer on the fallen, but on their killers. Who was strong enough to have done such a thing? And for what specific purpose? She knew very little, only enough to confirm their worst fears about the traveling party. She hoped that in her absence, Kalec had learned more. Kalecgos knew that with every second that ticked by, the Focusing Iris was moving farther and farther south. And it was becoming harder and harder to trace. He had an advantage others in his flight did not. Though he was no longer the blue Dragon Aspect, he still led the blues. That tie to his flight, with echoes of what he had once been, seemed to enhance his connection to the Iris. When Teralygos had said he could barely sense the object any longer, Kalecgos had closed his eyes and drawn in three deep breaths. He visualized it in his mind, concentrating on it, on sensing and And there it was. It is now in the Borean Tundra, is it not? he asked Teralygos with his eyes still closed. Yes, yes, it is, and The words ended in a harsh, short cry. It is gone! No, it is not, Kalec said. I can still sense it. Many dragons sighed in relief. At that moment, a female voice said quietly, They were all slain, Kalecgos. All five. He opened his eyes and regarded Kirygososa sickly as she recounted what she, Banagos, and Alagososa had beheld. And you cannot say if it was human or elf, orc or goblin?

he asked when she was done. No scrap of a banner or distinctive arrow fletching? She shook her head. What colors we found were random. There were no footprints. The snow had melted too much, and they were clever to both avoid the softer sand and refrain from tracking blood on the rocks. All we know, Kalecgos, is that someone likely knew where to find them, was strong enough to slay five dragons, and has absconded with the Focusing Iris. Whoever they were, they knew exactly what they were doing. Her voice was low on this final sentence. Kalec nodded to her. Perhaps that is true. But so do we. This was spoken with a certainty he did not feel. I am able to sense generally in which direction it travels. And I will follow it and bring it back. You are our leader, Kalecgos, said Kirygosa. We need you here! He shook his head. No, you do not, he said quietly. It is because I am your leader that I must go. It is time we acknowledged what is happening how the flight is feeling. Many of our people have already left for the wide world. We once knew the role we needed to play; now we do not, and our most precious magical item, both tool and symbol, has been stolen, and good dragons lie dead for that theft. It is my job to guide and protect you. I have not done so. It hurt to admit it. I have failed, at least in this, and perhaps in other things. You do not need me here, to worry and wonder along with the rest of you while others venture forth to retrieve our stolen orb. That is my task and by performing it, I will indeed guide and protect you. Glances were exchanged, but no one protested. They all knew this was the right path. He had meant everything he said. The failure was his; the recovery of the item was his duty. But what he did not say was that he wanted to go. He felt more at home interacting with the younger races than he did here, ostensibly leading his flight. He caught Kiry's eye, and she at least seemed to understand this deeper emotion and approved of it. Kirygosa, daughter of Malygos, he said, take the wisdom of Teralygos and others, and be my voice here while I am gone. No one can truly be your voice, my friend, Kirygosa replied gently, but I will do all I can. If anyone can find the lost Focusing Iris in this wide world of ours, it will be you, who among us all know Azeroth best. There was nothing more to say. In silence, Kalecgos leaped upward and flew out into the cold, snowy day, following the gentle tug that whispered this way, this way. Kirygosa had said she thought Kalec knew Azeroth better than any other blue dragon. He could only hope she was right.