

There was a pause, and Isa could not quite see that everyone was looking at him - so deep he was into his thoughts.

"No, look," he began, not quite knowing what was the topic of the conversation.

"Why not go through the secret passage?"

"Well, boy," Philip muttered grudgingly, "it's a secret passage, see? Nobody knows where it is, it's a concept."

"But the tower..."

A pair of arrows shot from the ramparts struck near to them. The mage raised his hands again, and a small shimmering dome hung over them.

"No, look at him!" Philip swung again. "Now is not the right time!"

Isa jerked away from him, dodging a smack, and accidentally stumbled out of the shield. An arrow whistled close by, and Isa flinched frightened, stumbled over a rock, and collapsed to the ground.

"I suggest we return him to camp," Sebastian said grudgingly, shielding Isa from the arrow that flew right into his face with his usual - non-magical - shield.

"I agree," Philip said in a shaky voice.

"They told me to take the newcomer with me," Robinson grimaced. "If we send him back, I won't be the only one who is punished."

Sebastian gave Isa a wry look.

"Wait," he began again, rising. "Wait a minute... We're going to the 'Tower of Secrecy', aren't we?"

"Yes!" Robinson shouted. He couldn't stand it anymore. "How many times must I tell you?"

"Wouldn't you think it would be more logical to have a secret passage in the 'Tower of Secrecy'?"

There was silence for a moment.