

Rhapsody

"Caroline Amongst the Cactuses"

Caroline was ten, and she lived in Arizona. She liked Arizona, because it was warm and dry and sunny, and most days of the year she could play outside. Caroline liked playing outside, in the air and sunshine.

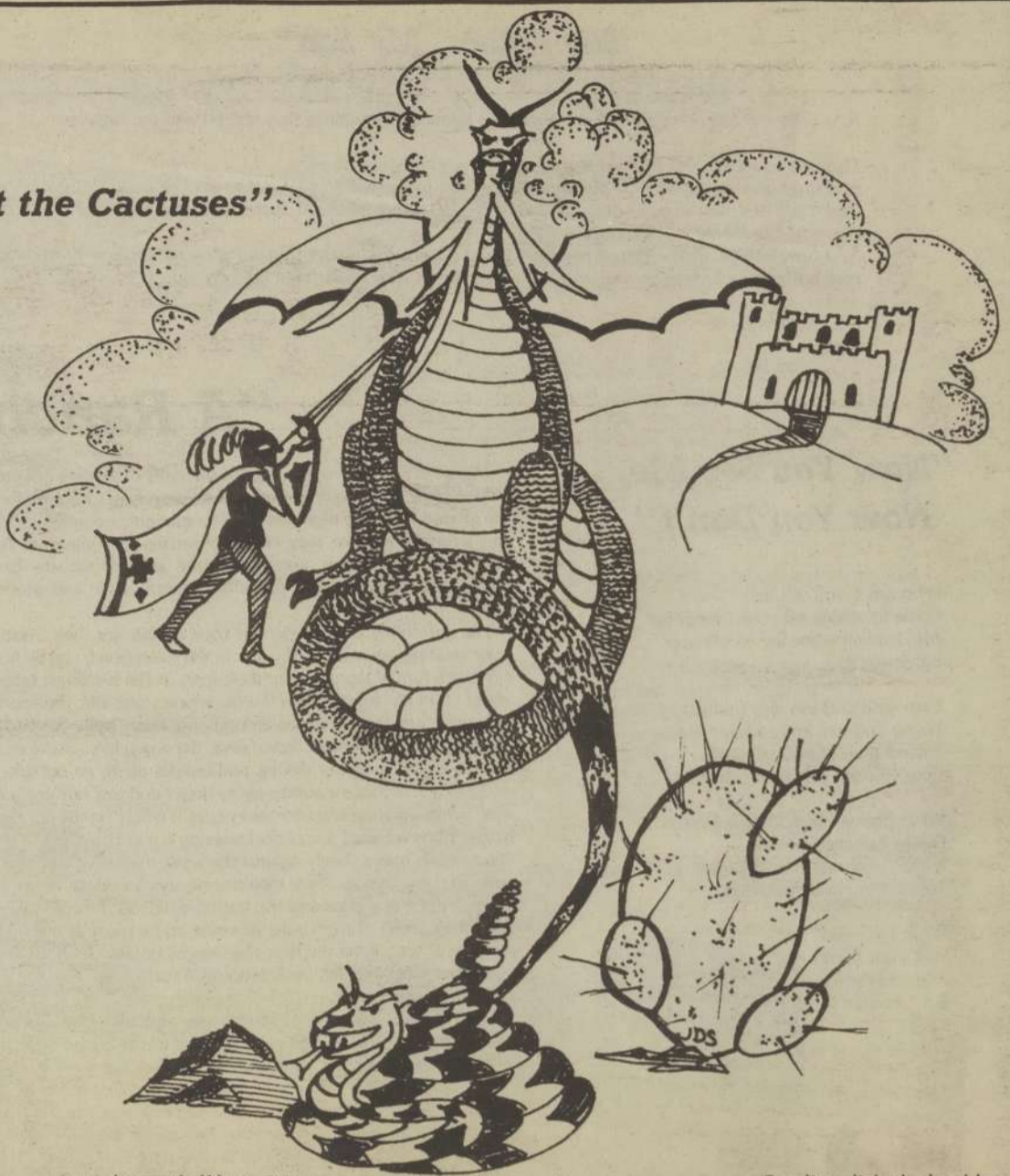
One day Caroline left the trailer where she lived with her mother. The sky was clear and the sun was hot, so Caroline had put on her yellow shorts and a T-shirt, and slipped her feet into red rubber thong sandals. Caroline's mother didn't like Caroline to dress this way when she was leaving the immediate area of the trailer. Caroline's mother worried about snakes, and preferred Caroline to wear jeans and sturdy boots. Caroline's mother had studied the subject and knew that snakes rarely bite people higher than mid-calf. That is why she liked Caroline to wear boots that came almost to the knee.

But Caroline's mother wasn't home, having left early to go shopping with a neighbor lady, so Caroline could dress any way she liked. Caroline didn't much worry about snakes.

Caroline decided to go play in the cactus patch that stood about a quarter of a mile away, in the desert behind the trailer park. Caroline's mother didn't like Caroline to play amongst the cactuses, being worried about spines and snakes and needles, but Caroline wasn't worried. The cactuses were her friends, and in their midst she could find privacy. She had her secret way, a way that led to an open space in the very heart of the patch, and she had never once been scratched in getting there.

Caroline hummed as she walked. She was happy to be going where she was going. She liked it amongst the cactuses.

Caroline came to her place in the midst of the cactuses and sat down to play. She made hills and valleys in the sand, and imagined them to be the landscape of a kingdom. She imagined that in this kingdom she was queen, and



spent a pleasant half hour giving queenly commands to her imaginary subjects. She decided that there must be a magic stone in her kingdom, and that this stone must have a sword in it, and that a handsome prince would have to come and pull the sword from the stone. Then he would have to slay a dragon with the sword. By this act he would win her hand in marriage, and they would live happily ever after.

Caroline looked around, but the sand in the clear space in the midst of the cactuses was unbroken by any lump of stone. Finally she spotted one, nestled behind a tall saguaro. She walked to it on her knees, reached for it, and froze.

The snake was a big one, long and fat, with many rings on the rattles of his tail. His scales scintillated in the sun as if he were made of copper and gold and bronze. The whirring, chattering sound of his rattles filled Caroline's ears. The snake smiled at her and tasted her scent with his tongue. Caroline didn't move.

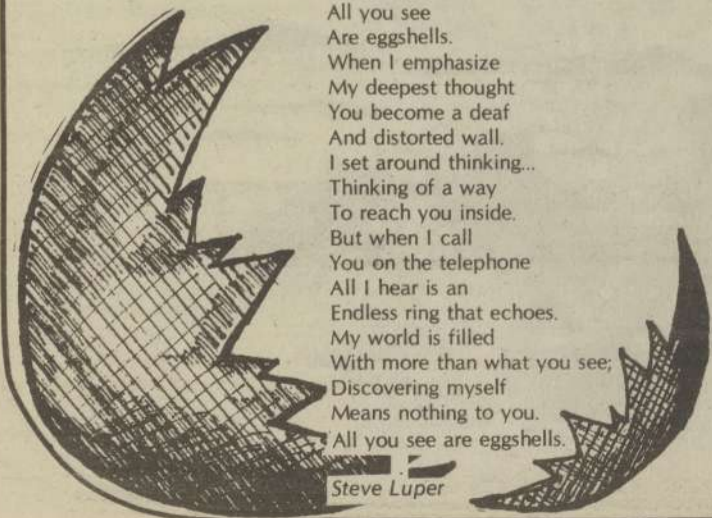
The strike was uncoiling, quicker than quick, mouth gaping flash of long dripping white, scales against flesh, glittering burst of pain. Then the writhing on the ground, curling around the agony which spread and spread, and became numbness, and finally ceased as darkness came.

Caroline licked the blood from her lips and watched the big snake till it had stopped moving, its head nearly severed from its body. You can never find a prince when you need one.

Caroline was a good girl. She knew it wasn't nice to kill something you weren't going to use. And she was getting hungry, and her mother wouldn't be home for hours. So she ate the snake, all but the rattles, which she saved to play with, and the head, which she buried deep under the magic rock in the midst of her kingdom.

Larry Pike

"Eggshells"



I talk to you deep
You look at me shallow
All you see
Are eggshells.
When I emphasize
My deepest thought
You become a deaf
And distorted wall.
I set around thinking...
Thinking of a way
To reach you inside.
But when I call
You on the telephone
All I hear is an
Endless ring that echoes.
My world is filled
With more than what you see;
Discovering myself
Means nothing to you.
All you see are eggshells.

Steve Luper

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Bring poems, short stories and essays to trailer B, "The Print".

Editor & Designer
Judy Singer

Untitled

Close your eyes
Give me your hand
Let me gently show you
The lover in the man

Reach for my love
It's still within your grasp
I'll erase all the memories
Of the lovers in the past

Give to me a smile
Touch me with your heart
Open up your world and let
Me be a part

As sure as the earth
Spins endlessly around
I could not endure
Without the love that I have found

R.C. Carlisle

