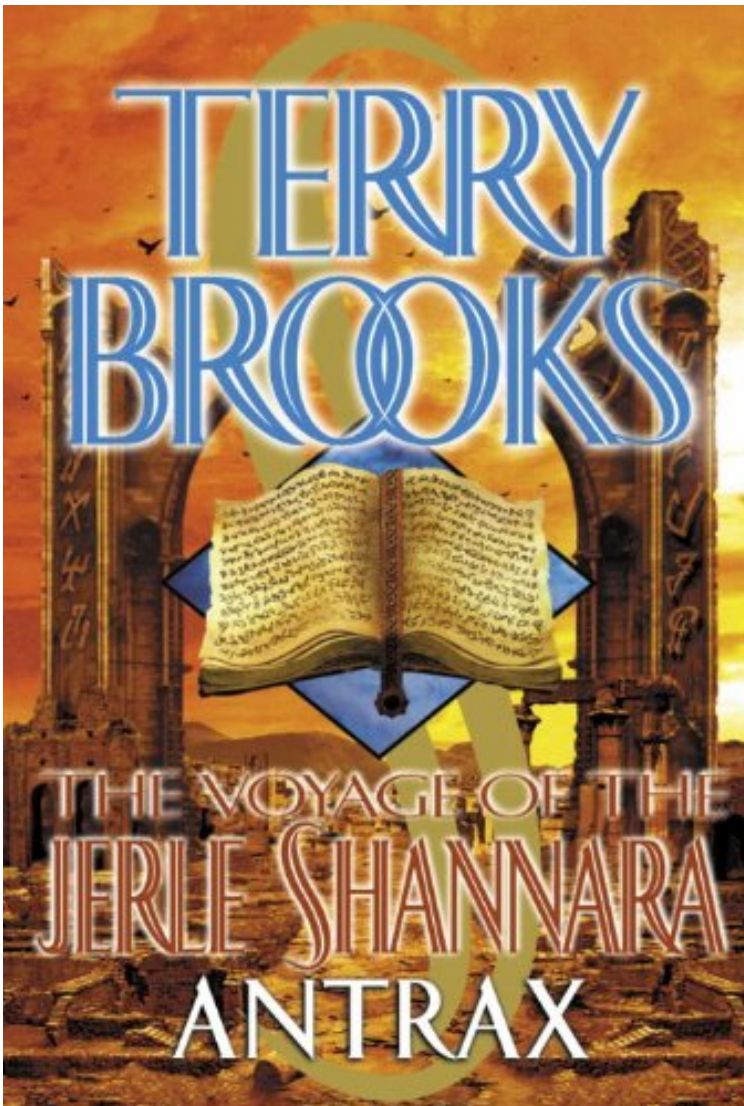


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# The Voyage of the Jerle Shannara: Antrax



*Par Terry Brooks*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurBONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Terry Brooks'sThe Measure of the Magic.A new novel by Terry Brooks is always a cause for celebration. For more than twenty years, the New York Times bestselling author of the classic Shannara epic has proven himself one of the modern masters of fantasy, winning the hearts and minds of devoted readers around the world. In his last acclaimed novel, Ilse

Witch, a brave company of explorers led by the last Druid, Walker Boh, traveled across unknown seas in search of an elusive magic. Yet perhaps Boh and his team were lured there for sinister, unforeseen purposes. . . Now in Antrax, as the crew aboard the airship Jerle Shannara is attacked by evil forces, the Druids protg Bek Rowe and his companions are pursued by the mysterious Ilse Witch. Meanwhile, Boh is alone, caught in a dark maze beneath the ruined city of Castledown, stalked by a hungry, unseen enemy. For there is

something alive in Castledown. Something not human. Something old beyond reckoning that covets the magic of Druids, elves, even the Ilse Witch. Something that hunts men for its own designs: Antrax. It is a spirit that commands ancient technologies and mechanical monsters, feeds off enchantment, and traps the souls of men. With the Jerle Shannara under siege and Antrax threatening the bold and unwary, the Ilse Witch finds herself face-to-face with a boy who claims to be the brother she last saw as an infant. Now a young man, Bek wields the magic of the wishsong and carries the Sword of Shannara upon his back. Unsure whether to trust Bek or to slay him, the Ilse Witch takes him prisoner. One has come pursuing truth, the other revenge. Yet both seek Walker Boh with the fate of the Four Lands hanging in the balance. Return to the world of beloved novelist Terry Brooks, where creatures drift up from the earth like mist, a hypnotic song can kill, a sword can cut through a veil of lies and one man, the true heir of an ancient magic, must choose between betrayal and redemption.

Extrait One Grianne Ohmsford was six years old on the last day of her childhood. She was small for her age and lacked unusual strength of body or extraordinary life experience and was not therefore particularly well prepared for growing up all at once. She had lived the whole of her life on the eastern fringes of the Rabb Plains, a sheltered child in a sheltered home, the eldest of two born to Araden and Biornliof Ohmsford, he a scribe and teacher, she a housewife. People came and went from their home as if it were an inn, students of her father, clients drawing on the benefit of his skills, travelers from all over the Four Lands. But she herself had never been anywhere and was only just beginning to understand how much of the world she knew nothing about when everything she did know was taken from her. While she was unremarkable in appearance and there was nothing about her on the surface of things that would suggest she could survive any sort of life-altering trauma, the truth of the matter was that she was strong and able in unexpected ways. Some of this showed in her startling blue eyes, which pinned you with their directness and pierced you through to your soul. Strangers who made the mistake of staring into them found themselves glancing quickly away. She did not speak to these men and women or seem to take anything away from her encounters, but she left them with a sense of having given something up anyway. Wandering her home and yard, long dark hair hanging loose, a waif seemingly at a loss for something to do or somewhere to go, or just sitting alone in a corner while the adults talked among themselves, she claimed her own space and kept it inviolate. She was tough-minded, as well, a stubborn and intractable child who once her mind was set on something refused to let it be changed. For a time her parents could do so by virtue of their relationship and the usual threats and enticements, but eventually they found themselves incapable of influencing her. She seemed to find her identity in making a stand on matters, by holding forth in challenge and accepting whatever came her way as a result. Frequently it was a stern lecture and banishment to her room, but often it was simply denial of something others thought would benefit her.

Whatever the case, she did not seem to mind the consequences and was more apt to be bothered by capitulation to their wishes. But at the core of everything was her heritage, which manifested itself in ways that hadn't been apparent for generations. She knew early on that she was not like her parents or their friends or anyone else she knew. She was a throwback to the most famous members of her family to Brin and Jair and Par and Coll Ohmsford, to whom she could directly trace her ancestry. Her parents explained it to her early on, almost as soon as her talent revealed itself. She was born with the magic of the wishsong, a latent power that surfaced in the Ohmsford family bloodline only once in every four or five generations. Wish for it, sing for it, and it would come to pass. Anything was possible. The wishsong hadn't been present in an Ohmsford in her parents' lifetimes, and so neither of them had any firsthand experience with how it worked. But they knew the stories, had been told them repeatedly by their own parents, the tales of the magic carried down from the time of the great Queen Wren, another of their ancestors. So they knew enough to recognize what it meant when their child could bend the stalks of flowers and turn aside an angry dog simply by singing. Her use of the wishsong was rudimentary and undisciplined at first, and she did not understand that it was special. In her child's mind, it seemed reasonable that everyone would possess it. Her parents worked to help her realize its worth, to harness its power, and to learn to keep it secret from others. Grianne was a smart girl, and she understood quickly what it meant to have something others would covet or fear if they knew she possessed it. She listened to her parents about this, although she paid less attention to their warnings about the ways it should be used and the purposes to which it should be put. She knew enough to show them what they expected of her and to hide from them what they did not. So on the last day of her childhood she had already come to terms with having use of the magic. She had constructed defenses to its demands and subterfuges to her parents' refusals to let her fully test its limits. Wrapped in the armor of her strong-minded determination and stubborn insistence, she had built a fortress in which she wielded the

wishsong with a sense of impunity. Her child's world was already more complex and devious than that of many adults, and she was learning the importance of never giving away everything of who and what she was. It was her gift of magic and her understanding of its workings that saved her. At the same time, and through no fault of her own, it was what doomed her parents and younger brother. She knew there was something wrong with her child's world some weeks before that last day. It manifested itself in small ways, things that her parents and others could not readily detect. There were oddities in the airsmells and tastes and sounds that whispered of a hidden presence and dark emotions. She caught glimpses of shadows on the vibrations of her voice that returned to her when she used the magic of her song. She felt changes in heat and cold that came only when she was threatened, except that always before she could trace their source and this time she could not. Once or twice, she sensed the closeness of dark-cloaked forms, perhaps the shape-shifters she had found out on several occasions before, always hidden and out of reach, but there nevertheless. She said nothing to her parents of these things because she had no solid evidence of them and only suspicion on which to buttress her complaints. Even so, she kept close watch. Her home was at the edge of a grove of maple trees and looked out across the flat, green threshold of the Rabb all the way to the foothills of the Dragons Teeth. While nothing could approach out of the west without being visible from a long way off, forests and hills shielded the other three quadrants. She scouted them from time to time, a precaution undertaken to give her a sense of security. But whatever watched was careful, and she never found it out. It hid from her, avoided her, moved away when she approached, and always returned. She could feel its eyes on her even as she looked for it. It was clever and skilled; it was accustomed to staying hidden when others would find it out. She should have been afraid, but she had not been raised with fear and had no reason to appreciate its uses. For her, fear was an annoyance she sought to banish and did not heed. She asked her father finally if there was anyone who would wish to hurt her, or him, or her mother or brother, but he only smiled and said they had nothing anyone would want that would provide reason for harm. He said it in a calm, assured way, a teacher imparting knowledge to a student, and she did not believe he could be wrong. When the black-cloaked figures finally came, they did so just before dawn, when the light was so pale and thin that it barely etched the edges of the shadows. They killed the dog, old Bark, when he wandered out for a look, an act that demonstrated unmistakably the nature of their dark intent. She was awake by then, alerted by some inner voice tied to her magic, hurrying through the rooms of her home on cats paws, searching for the danger that was already at the door. Her family was alone that morning, all of the travelers either come and gone or still on their way, and there was no one to stand with them in the face of their peril. Grianne never hesitated when she caught sight of the shadowy forms sliding past the windows. She sensed the presence of danger all around, a circle of iron blades closing with inexorable purpose. She yelled for her father and ran back to her bedroom, where her brother lay sleeping. She snatched him up without a word, hugging him to her. Soft and warm, he was barely two years old. She carried him from the room and down into the earthen cellar where perishable foodstuffs were kept. Above, her parents sought to cover her flight. The sounds of breaking glass and splintering wood erupted, and she could hear her father's angry shouts and oaths. He was a brave man, and he would stand and fight. But it would not be enough; she sensed that much already. She released a catch and pulled back the shelving section that hid the entrance to the cramped storm shelter they had never used. She placed her sleeping brother on a pallet inside. She stared down at him for a moment, at his tiny face and balled fists, at his sleeping form, hearing the shouts and oaths overhead turn to screams of pain and anguish, aware of tears flooding her eyes. Black smoke was seeping through the floorboards when she slipped from the shelter and sealed the entry behind her. She heard the crackle of flames consuming wood. Her parents gone, the intruders would come for her, but she would be quicker and more clever than they expected. She would escape them, and once she was safely away, outside in the pale dawn light, she would run the five miles to the next closest home and return with help for her brother. She heard the black-cloaked forms searching for her as she hurried along a short passageway to a cellar door that led directly outside. Outside, the door was concealed by bushes and seldom used; it was not likely they would think to find her there. If they did, they would be sorry. She already knew the sort of damage the wishsong could cause. She was a child, but she was not helpless. She blinked away her tears and set her jaw. They would find that out one day. They would find that out when she hurt them the same way they were hurting her. Then she was through the door and outside in the brightening dawn light, crouched in the bushes. Smoke swirled about her in dark clouds, and she felt the heat of the fire as it climbed the walls of her home. Everything was being taken from her, she thought in despair. Everything that mattered. A sudden movement to one side drew her attention. When she turned to look, a hand wrapped in a foul-smelling cloth

closed over her face and sent her spiraling downward into blackness. When she awoke, she was bound, gagged, and blindfolded, and she could not tell where she was or who held her captive or even if it was day or night. She was carried over a thick shoulder like a sack of wheat, but her captors did not speak. There were more than one; she could hear their footsteps, heavy and certain. She could hear their breathing. She thought about her home and parents. She thought about her brother. The tears came anew, and she began to sob. She had failed them all. She was carried for a long time, then laid upon the ground and left alone. She squirmed in an effort to free herself, but the bonds were too tightly knotted. She was hungry and thirsty, and a cold desperation was creeping through her. There could be only one reason she had been taken captive, one reason she was needed when her parents and brother were not. Her wish-song. She was alive and they were dead because of her legacy. She was the one with the magic. She was the one who was special. Special enough that her family was killed so that she could be stolen away. Special enough to cause everything she loved and cared for to be taken from her. There was a commotion not long after that, sudden and unexpected, filled with new sounds of battle and angry cries. They seemed to be coming from all around her. Then she was snatched from the ground and carried off, leaving the sounds behind. The one who carried her now cradled her while running, holding her close, as if to soothe her fear and desperation. She curled into her rescuers' arms, burrowed as if stricken, for such was the depth of her need. When they were alone in a silent place, the bonds and gag and blindfold were removed. She sat up and found herself facing a big man wrapped in black robes, a man who was not entirely human, his face scaly and mottled like a snake's, his fingers ending in claws, and his eyes lidless slits. She caught her breath and shrank from him, but he did not move away in response. You are safe now, little one, he whispered. Safe from those who would harm you, from the Dark Uncle and his kind. She did not know whom he was talking about. She looked around guardedly. They were crouched in a forest, the trees stark sentinels on all sides, their branches confining amid a sea of sunshine that dappled the woodland earth like gold dust. There was no one else around, and nothing of what she saw looked familiar. There is no reason to be afraid of me, the other said. Are you frightened by how I look? She nodded warily, swallowing against the dryness in her throat. He handed her a water skin, and she drank gratefully. Do not be afraid. I am of mixed breed, both Man and Mwellret, little one. I look scary, but I am your friend. I was the one who saved you from those others. From the Dark Uncle and his shape-shifters. That was twice he had mentioned the Dark Uncle. Who is he? she asked. Is he the one who hurt us? He is a Druid. Walker is his name. He is the one who attacked your home and killed your parents and your brother. The reptilian eyes fixed on her. Think back. You will remember seeing his face. To her surprise, she did. She saw it clearly, a glimpse of it as it passed a window in the thin dawn light, dusky skin and black beard, eyes so piercing they stripped you bare, dark brow creased with frown lines. She saw him, knew him for her enemy, and felt a rage of such intensity she thought she might burn from the inside out. Then she was crying, thinking of her parents and her brother, of her home and her lost world. The man across from her drew her gently into his arms and held her close. You cannot go back, he told her. They will be searching for you. They will never give up while they think you are alive. She nodded into his shoulder. I hate them, she said in a thin, sharp wail. Yes, I know, he whispered. You are right to hate them. His rough, guttural voice tightened. But listen to me, little one. I am the Morgawr. I am your father and mother now. I am your family. I will help you to find a way to gain revenge for what has been taken from you. I will teach you to ward yourself against everything that might hurt you. I will teach you to be strong. He whisked her away, lifting her as if she weighed nothing, and carried her deeper into the woods to where a giant bird waited. He called the bird a Shrike, and she flew on its back with him to another part of the Four Lands, one dark and solitary and empty of sound and life. He cared for her as he said he would, trained her in mind and body, and kept her safe. He told her more of the Druid Walker, of his scheming and his hunger for power, of his long-sought goal of dominance over all the Races in all the lands. He showed her images of the Druid and his black-cloaked servants, and he kept her anger fired and alive within her child's breast. Never forget what he has stolen from you, he would repeat. Never forget what you are owed for his betrayal. After a time he began to teach her to use the wish-song as a weapon against which no one could stand. Not once she had mastered it and brought it under her control, not once she had made it so much a part of her that its use seemed second nature. He taught her that even a slight change in pitch or tone could alter health to sickness and life to death. A Druid had such power, he told her. The Druid Walker in particular. She must learn to be a match for him. She must learn to use her magic to overcome his. After a while she thought no longer of her parents and her brother, whom she knew to be dead and lost to her forever; they were no more than bones buried in the earth, a part of a past forever lost, of a childhood erased in a single day. She gave herself over

to her new life and to her mentor, her teacher, and her friend. The Morgawr was all those while she grew through adolescence, all those and much more. He was the shaper of her thinking and the navigator of her life. He was the inspiration for her magics purpose and the keeper of her dreams of righting the wrongs she had suffered. He called her his little Ilse Witch, and she took the name for her own. She buried her given name with her past, and she never used it again. From the Hardcover edition.

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