

The Grumpy Dragon

Once, when the world was a younger place, there lived an ancient dragon who lived within a vast mountain range. The mountain range stretched across the landscape and spiralled high into the azure blue sky and white clouds.

Two young dragons soared high above these mountains, flapping their large wings.

"Hey Spencer, isn't that where Grumpy Ted lives?" asked Spike, as the two dragons flew over the home of Ted the grumpy Dragon.

"Yeah, it is!" replied Spencer.

"Let's pop down and pay a visit to Ted, and have some fun," said Spike, both dragons agreed and they swooped down into the entrance of Ted's home.

Ted was sleeping on top of his mound of treasure and gold, which he had amassed during his life as a dragon. The two young dragons crept into Ted's cave and looked at the sleeping dragon and his mound of treasure. Ted over-time had become grumpy because many decades ago his gold and treasure turned dull and had lost its shine. This meant that he was the laughing stock of the dragon world.

"Hey Spike, blimey it's so bright in here," shouted Spencer while he walked around the cave.

"It's so bright in here Spencer," replied Spike, "Why is it so bright mate? Why not put these shades on and let's see what is about."

Ted slowly raised his head slightly, he was in no mood for young joking dragons and decided to remove them from his cave. He opened his mouth and blew out a flame of hot fire from his mouth, towards the two young dragons. The two dragons giggled and laughed as they flew back out of the cave, as the flames narrowly missed their feet.

Ted sighed and laid his head back onto his dull mound of gold and looked sorrowful. After a couple of minutes later he opened his large yellow cat-like eyes, which were now full of a new grim determination. Ted walked towards the entrance of the cave and stretched his large wings and soared up into the open sky. He had decided that for once and for all he would solve the issue of his dull gold and treasure, and he knew he would need to seek the help of Jane the Dragon, who was the wisest of all the Dragons that ever existed.

Ted flew with great speed towards the region in which Jane the Dragon lived, while flying he tried to remember the last time he flew so fast and with such vigour. Ahead in the distance Ted heard a buzzing sound, and then flying towards Ted was Sam the stripy dragon. Sam was famous for wearing a yellow and black stripy jumper, he always wanted to be a bee.

"Hey Sam," shouted Ted, "Long time no see, how are you keeping. Can you tell me where Jane the Dragon lives." Sam the stripy dragon firstly looked shocked and then smiled to see his old friend Ted. The two dragons chatted about the old times, after which Sam gave the necessary directions to Ted who continued with his journey.

Once Ted had his bearing it did not take the ancient dragon long to find the cave in which Jane lived. Has Ted walked into the home of Jane the dragon, he looked about. Inside the cave, which was warm and very cosy, it was very obviously that it contained all the hallmarks of a lady dragon. Flowers grew around the ledges of the cave, of all colours and sizes. A couple of tables in the corner had candles and bowls of pot pourri. At the back of the cave was a vast bookshelf full of books of dragon lore. In the middle of the cave was a mound of gold and treasure, which shone with a brilliant brightness.

Jane was lying on top of her mound of treasure, while painting her nails a nice red tone.

"Hello Ted," she shrieked in delight as she saw Ted walk towards her, "and what do we owe this pleasure."

"Hello Jane," quickly replied Ted while he looked around the cave, "I need your advice, on the matter that makes my life a misery Jane."

"Your treasure and gold Ted," said Jane, going straight to the problem which Ted sought her knowledge. Jane had a special gift, some believed it to be female dragon intuition, others just thought she was the wises of Dragons.

"Yes Jane, you are indeed very wise. Its my gold, its so dull, and doesn't shine like your gold, what I am to do! Life is so unfair." Jane did not move but looked and thought for a while.

"An interesting problem Ted, I will consult the lore of the dragons!" she said moving from her pile of gold towards the large collection of books. "Make yourself at home Ted," she continued, "and you if wish a drink the kitchen is around the side!"

Ted the grumpy dragon paced up and down the cave like an expecting father, made continued to make lots of cups of tea while Jane researched the books of dragon lore. Jane studied hard amongst the books and papers, even as the sun sunk below the skyline and night start to accelerate into the early hours of the morning.

Jane moved her glasses to the top of her head and looked

around at Ted.

"I'm sorry Ted, there is nothing in dragon lore that can help you." said Jane.

Ted's smile dropped, his glowing bright eyes immediately dimmed and he became despondent.

"Don't fret Ted, there could be an answer, you however must seek the knowledge of the wise Oracle Zstmore the great. He is the greatest Oracle that ever existed, and the holder of all knowledge. Seek Zstmore, in the plains of Tera, far to the west of our lands."

Ted's eyes suddenly re-ignited with a bright glow.

"Thank you Jane for your council" said Ted as he bowed.

"Before you go Ted, you will need this," replied Jane as she searched through the collection of nik-naks. She picked out a box and handed it to Ted, "Within this box there is an item that will help you find the great Oracle. But only open the box when you feel that you are at a dead end and you are lost without direction or purpose."

Ted took the box placing it under his wing for protection he walked out of Jane's cave and opened up his large wings and took to the sky. Ted did not know exactly the location of the plains of Tera, even in his younger days he had not flown so far into the western lands. The lands to the west were mainly unknown to the dragons, since their numbers had dwindled, dragons had stopped exploring the known world. While soaring high in the sky, the ancient dragon started to feel his stomach starting to rumble with the pangs of hunger, looking down at the countryside below he saw a field covered in cattle.

Standing outside his barn, an old farmer looked over his fields and land. The farmer had a large head, covered in a thinning amount of grey hair, which was softly blowing in the wind. His waist line had become wider and his loosely fitting garments had to be tied with string. The farmer looked over his prize winning herd of cattle, when he looked up he saw the outline of a dragon swooping down.

"Oh, No you don't!" shouted the farmer picking up his pitch-fork and rushing out into the middle of the field.

"Leave my prize cattle, you evil....." continued the farmer until he was squashed under the large foot of Ted. All that Ted could hear was the muffled sounds of the farmer under his foot.

Quickly Ted swung his head and bite into a cow, which was slowly walking past him. A couple more bites and a few large gulps from Ted and there was nothing left of the cow. After letting his food to settle the grumpy dragon soared back into

the crisp blue sky, leaving the flattened farmer to recover from his ordeal and mumble to himself about the horror which had just taken place.

Ted flew for days into lands and countries that he had never seen before. Strange landscapes with weird creatures that even frighten the ancient dragon was an added excitement to his adventures. He had to sleep in strange dark caves with howling noises all around, finding food and water was also a high priority on his adventure, however he always manage to find supplies. However during his travels his large yellow cat-like eyes still burnt with a grim determination, he mind wandered on many occasion mainly wondering on what state he had left his cave.

Many days of travel, during one early morning while high in the sky, Ted who's poor wings ached due to the amount of flying. Ahead Ted noticed a large expanse. He swooped down closer to the ground to find what the large expanse was, and if he was going in the right direction.

Quickly Ted noticed a figure dressed in rather a white grey hoodie outfit, leaning against a fence chewing on some mushrooms. So landed by the side of the figure.

"Excuse me Sir, I am searching for the plains of Tera. Is that expanse ahead of us the plains of Tera?" asked Ted. The young lad looked up from under is hood, while stuffing more mushrooms into his mouth.

"Why should I say anything to you scaly, you are in my face," replied the young lad.

"I will be more in your face in a minute," quickly replied Ted turning his smile into anger.

"Well it is, you are ain't that bright if you did not know that you scaly fool," laughed the youth. "Anyway you better get off our patch scaly or we will cut you up mate."

"Off your patch," replied Ted. Suddenly Ted raised himself to his full height and shoot out a stream of hot fire out of his mouth and flew up into the sky. "By the way your heads on fire," shouted Ted as he left.

The young lad moved his hand up to his head and then scream with pain. Ted looked back at the young lad whose head was covered in flames running around in a random fashion, desperately trying to find water to extinguish his burning head.

Ted continued his journey into the plains of Tera to find the greatest Oracle of all time Zstmore. The plains where

indeed vast, covered in sparse vegetation while the sky was a bright blue colour. The sun was shining brightly in the sky and Ted the grumpy dragon flapped his wings with great swooping motions. Ted saw with his great cat like eyes, a sign low below him on the ground. He plunged down towards the ground and looked at the sign. The sign had an arrow pointing in the direction that Ted was heading, with the words, To Oracle.

Underneath a small noticed read, 'Warning, definitely no spiders welcome.'

Flying towards the directions of the arrows, Ted noticed the small amount of flies buzzing past him now and again, he wondered if the plains needed some spiders to get rid of these annoying flies. After several hours of travelling, Ted arrived at the centre of the plains of Tera, where the Oracle Zstmore lived. However all that Ted found was empty space and a swarm of flies. Nothing was around and Ted started to feel annoyed. What a waste of time thought the grumpy dragon, and laid down on the ground and rested his head and closed his eyes.

"Remember the box," spoke the voice of Jane the dragon within the mind of Ted.

Suddenly he raised his large head and pulled out the box that Jane had given him, quickly he opened the box and looked inside. Inside the box was a large magnifying glass, which Ted took out and looked at. What was the use of this object Ted thought. While looking at the object the bright sun caught the lens and suddenly Ted focused the intense light onto a nearby fly which caught fire.

"Oops," said Ted.

"Oh you," shouted a voice.

Ted looked around and could not see a thing. Suddenly moving the magnifying glass he looked through it and noticed a whole world below him. A micro world of building, library's, gardens and hundreds of small insects existed around him.

"Mind what you do with magnifying glass young dragon," shouted the voice. Ted looked around and noticed below him in a court yard was a fly with a large white beard and spectacles over his eyes. The fly seemed to be speaking into a device which seem to amplify his voice.

"Sorry, I did not notice you," replied Ted.

"I can see that, you have just cooked one of our senior librarians," said the fly in an annoyed tone. "Know what do you want Ted."

"How do you know my name?" asked Ted.

"I know everything Ted, for I am Zstmore the great

Oracle. And I know that Jane the Dragon sent you to find me." said Zstmore.

"Really I am amazed that you know all this, " said Ted in awe of the great Oracle.

"Over the centuries the flies of the world have been recording all the facts that happened everywhere. We have flies that monitor and live in every home, around every building or animal there will be a fly. We listen, make notes of everything that happens around everywhere in our known world Ted.

The information collected is brought back to us via another fly who gives the this data to our scholars here in this vast complex. With this information we record into our books, and tomes of lore, and placed in our library's where used as the greatest resource known to any living animal. There are over five thousand flies within this complex and city, all writing busily the facts of the world that we live in. So we do know of your quest Ted and many other things about you and your world," said Zstmore stroking his long white beard as he explained.

Ted was astonished what he was hearing and suddenly realised why he saw so many flies during his journey in the plains of Tera. Ted moved the magnifying glass around and know notice other small details which he had missed in his first inspection. Small building containing hundreds of flies who sat at desks writing in large books. Obviously recording information which they had gathered during travels of other flies. Ted could also make out that inside these building walls of books, tomes and parchments which seem so small to Ted. He realised how much information could be contain within the building that was surrounding Ted.

"I shall try and never harm another fly," said Ted has he realised how clever this system was.

"Thank you Ted," replied Zstmore, "For my part I am the chief librarian and holder of all this information. This is why I am the greatest Oracle of our current times." he continued looking rather happy with the knowledge that he was the greatest oracle that was living.

"I am honoured to meet you Zstmore. Could you help me, for my treasure has gone dull and does not shine any more. The other dragons mock me and I feel ashamed of my treasure horde." said Ted.

"We know of your quest Ted," quickly replied Zstmore. "And we believe we have a solution. However its going to be very dangerous for you Ted."

"What Zstmore, you mean there is some thing that can make my gold and treasure shine again," shouted Ted with

excitement.

"Charm down Ted," said Zstmore, "The solution involves the most fear knight of our world. This knight as killed many of your kind Ted, and even you possibly might have hear of his deeds. For the knight in question is called Sir Shinelot, and he is the noblest and bravest knight."

"I fear no knight," quickly replied Ted, "but where can I find this Shinelot."

"Sir Shinelot is a knight of the rectangle table of the castle Camomile. You will find the castle Camomile South to yours lands. But be warn Ted, Sir Shinelot as slain many dragons, even ancients dragons like yourself."

"Thank you Zstmore for giving me hope, that I can regain my pride amongst my dragon folk. And I will never hurt another fly." said Ted has he began to prepare to take off into the blue sky.

"Farewell Ted, and good luck." said Zstmore the great oracle of all time.

The dragon replaced the magnifying glass back in its box and place it under his wing and then took to the sky.

After several days of travelling the ancient dragon finally managed to reach the realm of Camomile. The dragon soared low over the green fields which where covered in the early morning dew. Ahead on a slight hill stood the castle Camomile, surround in a thick fog. Even in this dense fog the castle was a spectacular sight. The walls of the castle where crisp white and seem to extended into the clouds they where so tall. Ted landed a safe distance from the castle and examined the castle in more detail. Two roads lead from either side of the castle, which had some wagons and people going about their daily business. Outside the walls where small markets stalls selling local products. Around the top of the castle many guards could be seen watching and patrolling the castle.

The swirling mists where just starting to fade as the sun started to break through the blanket of mist, suddenly bells started to sound around the castle of Camomile and Ted realised the guards had spotted him. From around the outside of the castle screams and cries of people could now be heard, has people rushed into the protection of the castle walls.

The bells stopped and a quick round of trumpet sounds echoed around the castle. A brave knight with bright armour and a long lance, riding a strong horse started towards the direction of Ted. Ted decided to settle down and wait for the knight to arrive, he would then have parley with knight which he assumed would be Sir Shinelot. Even from the current distance, the knights armour shone so brightly. The ancient

dragon hoped that soon his treasure would be the glittering in the same way.

Ted watched as Sir Shinelot moved closer to his position, however the nearer the knight got the brighter his armour seemed to shine. Until the intense light reflecting from the armour was so great that Ted could not see.

"Excuse me Sir Shinelot," said Ted to the on coming horsemen. Suddenly the knight rushed past Ted at great speed and a sudden pain ripped through his wing and into his side. Ted was still blinded by the light, but he knew he had to escaped the currently situation and fast. Quickly he rushed forward, spread his large wings and launched himself into the morning sky. However every beat of his wings caused him extreme shocks of pain.

"Come back you cad," shouted Sir Shinelot, "I have not finished with your scaly skin."

When Ted's vision had returned to normal he had to look at what was causing the extreme pain, by turning his head he looked at his wing. The lance of the knight had pierced through his left wing and was still embedded in the side of his body. Which made his flying very painful.

"Ouch!", screamed Ted, thinking that meeting did not go to plan. Ted could feel his blood slowly flow from the wound, and he knew that the situation did not look hopeful. He knew he had to fly towards his home country.

After hours of flying Ted the grumpy dragon could feel himself getting tired and started to fly lower to the ground. His head was spinning and the pain was unbearable. Suddenly from above he heard the familiar buzzing sound of Sam the stripy dragon.

"Hello Ted, do not see you for ages then.... oh no Ted what has happen to you. Wow Ted, that looks so nasty. How on earth have you done that," inquired Sam.

"Help, sam..." coughed Ted with a heavy deep breath. The dragons quickly landed on the side of a hill, the hillside was covered in lush green grass however they did not really take much noticed of the landscape.

"Better remove that lance first," said Sam, who with great skill plucked out the lance from the side of Ted. However now that the lance was removed the blood flowed even faster from the opened wound. Sam quickly tore off a length of his yellow and black stripy top, and tied it around Ted's waist to stop the flow of blood.

"Thank you Sam," said Ted and he looked back at Sam.

"Ted you are too weak to fly all the way home, you will have to climb on my back and I will get us home. We need to get you straight to the medical centre," replied Sam.

Sam strained with the pressure of the weight of the ancient dragon as Ted walked onto his back.

"You could lose a couple of stone Ted, you have are one heavy dragon," said Sam who strained as he took to the sky. Ted was carried all the way back to his homeland, amongst the large mountain ranges, it took Sam longer than expected. Ted was hardly conscious when he arrived at the medical centre.

Immediately on arrival at the medical centre, four younger dragons took Ted into the main operation theatre. A team of highly trained medical dragons patched up his wound on his body, and mended the hole in his wing. Ted the grumpy dragon was put on a drip on place on an individual pile of treasure, which all dragons in the medical centre.

After a couple of days of convalesce Ted was nearly recovered from his wounds, however he was still feeling upset and sad.

He was reflecting on his adventure, while knitting a new stripy jumper for Sam. He looked over his spectacles as his doctor made his daily walks around.

"Ted," quickly said the doctor in an enthusiast manner, "You have recovered enough for us to be happy that you can leave and return home. Please remember not to do anything strenuous for the next couple of weeks, and plenty of rest. Most importantly Ted, I would advise that you avoid Sir Shinelot in the future, for no dragon as ever got the better of him."

"Doctor, I wish to thank you and your team. I really appreciate all you have done" replied Ted shifting his body weight, since he felt uncomfortable, especially on such a small mound of treasure.

Later that day Ted flew home, his wing was still painful as he soared high in the sky. Before returning home he returned the box with the magnifying glass back to Jane the dragon. He then dropped off the finished knitted stripy jumper to Sam and thanked him for helping him out, after which he returned back to his cave. The familiar cave felt very welcoming to Ted the grumpy dragon, the feeling of home, made the ancient dragon smiled as he walked around his own place. However his happiness turned to misery when he looked upon his gold and treasure. The dragon crawled on top of his treasure, laid down, curled his body around and closed his yellow cat like eyes. While Ted started to slip into sleep he thought about his adventure and imagined his treasure shining brightly like the knights armour.

Ted awoke from a dream, swirling images run around in his head, which moved around until they seemed to form a plan. Suddenly he uncurled himself and moved to the entrance of the

cave, as he continued thinking about his plan. Taking to the air, the words of the doctor started ringing once again in his mind to avoid Sir Shinelot and take plenty of rest.

Spike the young dragon was sleeping on his small mound of treasure, when he was awoken by a large thud outside of his cave. Spikes eyes opened and he lifted his head as Ted marched down his hall way towards Spike.

"Look Ted, sorry it was only a joke," shouted Spike as he moved back into the corner of the cave, and starting to cover his face.

"I need something from you Spike," said Ted in a stern way, as Spike screamed in horror.

Ted quickly left the cave and made a direct route for Spencer's home, the air was fresh but extremely cold.

Spencer was taking a shower in his indoor waterfall, the thud of Ted landing outside his cave made him take notice of the entrance.

"Hello, who's there," inquired Spencer.

Suddenly Spencer saw the large shadow of Ted the grumpy dragon forming against the inside of his wall and the echoing sound of his foot steps getting closer.

"Who's there," asked Spencer again, suddenly Spencer shrieked in shock as Ted the grumpy dragon enter his cave.

"Please Ted," shouted Spencer moving backwards.

"I need something from you Spencer," said Ted in a stern way again, and Spencer screamed in horror.

Ted the grumpy dragon left Spencer's cave in a hurry, however the ancient dragon did not seem to be grumpy. Ted had a board smile and his yellow cat like eyes, shone like two small suns. The adventure was not over, the dragon stretched out his large wings and took to the sky. The constant ache of pain did not seem to bother him now as he flew south.

Ted landed in front of the castle of Camomile once again, he knew that his fate and life just hanged back a small thread. Once again the screams of local people were heard followed by the bells of the castle ringing. Then shortly after the trumpets sounded and out rode the brave knight Sir Shinelot.

In the distance Ted saw the knight gallop towards him, the knight's armour looked even brighter than before. His last encounter with Shinelot flash through Ted's mind which sent a cold shiver through his body. Even his wound seemed to ache more with the sight of the knight.

Sir Shinelot closed in onto Ted the grumpy dragon, who's vision was once again completely obscured by the brightness of the armour. The ancient dragon put his ear to the ground,

and when the knight was nearly upon him, he quickly reached under his wing and pulled out a pair of shades. Ted had taped together both Spencer's and Spike's shades together to make a pair of super dark shades. Wearing the shades Ted could just make out the knight galloping towards him, the knight was so close, he was just seconds away.

Sir Shinelot noticed the shades on Ted's head, however it was too late, the dragon quickly flicked his tail and hit the knight with such force it knocked him into the air and landed some distance away. The horse reared in panic and galloped back to the safety of the castle. The knight was dazed and confused lying on the floor. Gathering his thought the knight was about to get to his feet, when he was pinned down to the floor by the large foot of the ancient dragon.

"You horrible beast, do your worst I fear you not," shouted the knight.

"Sir Shinelot, I do not wish you harm. I just need to know your secret of your amazing bright armour. I'm Ted the grumpy dragon because my treasure does not shine, and is dull.

qOther dragons tease and laugh at my treasure, if I could make it shine as bright at your armour I will once again be a proud dragon. Please Sir Shinelot, give me my honour and pride amongst my kind once more. How would your peers see yourself if your amour was rusty and dull Sir Shinelot," said the dragon with pleading tone in his voice.

Shinelot did not move or said anything for a while, he was thinking hard about the current position that he was in.

"Sir Dragon, if you return to your homeland and never fly over our heads here in Camomile, I will give you the secret of my shining armour. I believe that you are honourable and wise, and I take your word if you agree to my terms," replied Shinelot.

"Okay, only on one other condition that you should not hunt down my kind. Us dragons are now so few, however I give you leave to defend yourself against any dragon silly enough to attack your grand castle Camomile." said Ted.

"It is a deal," quickly replied the knight.

Ted lifted his great foot that was pinning down the knight on the ground. The knight reached into his armour and took out a flask of liquid.

"Take this Sir dragon," for this liquid inside will be enough to make your treasure shine for many years. Ted took the small flask into his grasp and read the label.

"Brasso-matic, the liquid the automatically polishes and cleans. So how long will this last Sir Shinelot and where do you get it from?" asked Ted while looking at the label.

"Our magician Merlin makes this special potion, it will last you for centuries dragon. Well beyond our years. Just apply one small drop to your treasure and it should transform it into the brightest treasure in all your kingdom." said Sir Shinelot.

"Thank you so much, Sir Shinelot you are a noble and brave knight," replied Ted with a tear running from his face. "If you are in ever in the need of a help of a dragon, please allow me to be able to repay this debt in the future."

Ted the grumpy dragon took off into soared up high in the sky, however a new energy beamed from him like a great sun. He felt alive once again and confident that the special liquid would work. It only took the ancient dragon half the time to return home. Once home he opened the flask and dropped one some drop of liquid onto his dull treasure. If by magic the dropped seem to expand and cover his whole mound of treasure. A fizzing noise erupted from under the liquid, and it seemed to be bubbling. Ted now started to look nervous, what was the liquid doing to his treasure mound and gold, was this a horrible trick by the knight.

However suddenly there was a puffy sound, a blinding flash of white and Ted treasure and gold shone with an amazing brilliance. Ted had to wear his shades once again, just to see his own treasure, his ancient dragon heart missed a beat and pride welled up inside him. From that he was never ever called Ted the grumpy dragon he was know as Ted the happy dragon, and he treasure stayed bright until the end of his life which was a terrible long time, and he had many more exciting adventures.

Written by E Morley
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