

Dragons Don't Eat Vegetables. Or How Graham had an Idea.



There was once a dragon. A dragon so fierce and strong that the mere mention of his name could turn a man in to a crying baby, make milk turn into cheese and crack a dozen coconuts straight down the middle.

Thankfully, the people of the village never ever spoke the dragons name, through the fear that he might just be listening.

An the dragon did listen. Oh yes , he would listen for the sound of the peasants relaxing at the side of the lake or a horse in its stable eating hay. And when he heard these sounds he would spread out his leathery wings and prepare for his supper. The reason for this was that the dragon loved to eat all the wrong things. His diet was a constant trouble to the villager. So far his year the loss of life was up on last years figures for the same time last year and the damage to crops and livestock was of the chart. Rodney, the town clerk would have had to redraw, all his predictions for the remainder of the year,(had he not himself become a statistic), when the dragon ate him as an appetiser.

In fact the dragon was getting fatter and fatter and the towns folk were, let us say, a little tiered of having to creep around in there own village.

With the loss of Rodney the Mayor felt it was time to take positive action. Rodney had been is brother in law, and many of the towns people joked, that the mayor had to fight two dragons but only lived with one the Mayoress . The Mayoress would often be seen practicing her dragons raw especially the night she heard of poor Rodney's fate.

"You simply must do something about that dragon" she hollered "and I mean now" Rodney was supposed to have tea next week and his untimely death had left a nasty hole in the Mayoresses' calendar. If matters kept on like this she may even have to invite a commoner for tea.

"Yes darling, No darling whatever you say darling" snivelled the Mayor.

"Send for the town cryer" said the Mayor.

" Begging your Lordships pardon" said the serf "but we no longer have a town cryer"

"The dragon is rather partial to eating people who carry a large bell and shout a lot" said the serf " He kind of think its like an ice-cream van for dragons. They go around the streets playing music just around teatime".

"Well put up a notice then" snapped the Mayor " say something like town meeting, concerning the large, angry and scary dragon. Tonight , church steps ,seven pm all must attend".

And so it was that tonight at seven pm he was to address the town's folk and ask for ideas on how to deal with the problem.

At seven o'clock that night the serf was ordered to address the crowd that had gathered outside the church.

" His Lordship the Mayor asks for ideas on how he my bring an end to the reign of terror that he and his people have had to endure due to the actions of the dragon" said the serf. "Any ideas must be recorded according to tradition" he added.

"Get a divorce" shouted a man near the front of the square. "Cut her allowance" shouted another. "Tell her to go live with her sister" came another reply.

The serf was busy writing all these replies in the town journal until the Mayor under instruction from his wife told him to stop writing as he was embarrassing the Mayoress.

" The mayor would like to make it clear that he is not seeking marriage guidance and it in fact talking about the dragon that lives in the cave above the town. Just as he was about to speak the serf was caught up in a large claw. AAARGH! The real dragon"! Yelped the serf in fear. And just like that, two large leathery wing swept him up into the dragons waiting mouth, and with a crunch, he was gone to join the many town criers and poor Rodney.

'Right" said the Mayor," that is the last straw"
'It's also the last serf" said the Mayoress.

" Go home everybody and bring bottles and sticks, Knives and bricks. We're off to tame a dragon" Yelled the Mayor in anger.

Ten minutes later the town square was full of angry people ready to go dragon hunting. And ten minutes later they were all standing in front of the dragons cave.

"Arm yourselves men" cried the Mayor from behind a rock "and go slay me a dragon"

A tall man well known in the village stepped towards the cave holding a large rock "come out of there dragon" he shouted. But all that came out of the cave was a large burst of flame. Seeing the flames approach the man dropped the rock and ran back.

A woman tried to throw a bucket of water in to the cave but the dragon used his breath to turn it to steam.

"This will not do" said the Mayoress from behind a tree " Go talk to the dragon, ask him to go away and stop eating the villagers".

As the villagers, the Mayor and the Mayoress were all frightened of the dragon they decided that the best person to talk to the dragon should be someone who had little or no remaining family. In that way nobody would miss them should the dragon react badly. They should also have little importance in the daily running of the village so that life could carry on normally should ill befall the person elected. And they should be grateful; grateful that they had been chosen for this important task.

So it was that Graham the orphan was elected by democratic means to talk to the dragon, for being an orphan he had no parents to miss him, he was ignored in many of the daily decisions made by the villagers (the fact that he was not consulted in the choice of volunteer to talk to the dragon being a fine example of the importance people put on his opinions). And he was grateful. Or rather he should be, as many other better classed villagers and townsfolk, and important individuals said they would have loved the job of talking to the dragon, but had forgone the chance in order, that Graham could take their place.

As Graham advanced on the mouth of the cave he tried to remember what he had been told at the orphanage, namely that "you must always eat your vegetables" as he had no other words to offer or means to keep the dragon from making a meal of him he politely suggested that the dragon may prefer to eat a few more vegetables and a few less villagers.

The advice however did not go down well with the dragon, who began bellowing smoke from the cave, so much so that a large cloud formed over the mouth of the cave. "Vegetables? Vegetables! Dragons don't eat vegetables they eat people" At this very moment something happened to Graham that had never occurred before and would never happen again. He had a brilliant idea. "What if they blocked up the mouth of the cave and starved the dragon. In this way nobody would get hurt and they would all live safely free from fear of the dragon".

The silence was deafening . Nobody seem to move or speak until the Mayor shouted out "Excellent! get too it, right away".

So whilst the dragon blew smoke the villagers blocked the cave with large boulders. After a while the smoke subsided and a loud coughing noise could be heard from inside the cave.

" Hey, that's not fair" spluttered the dragon " how am I supposed to get out?"

"You're not" said Graham " from now on we will push vegetables through the small gaps in the rocks until you begin eating them. Then when you promise to eat your vegetables we will remove the rocks and everybody will be happy"

"That won't work " said the dragon "I don't like vegetables and I am old enough to make my own choices. Now remove these rock immediately or I will get very angry."

"Not going to happen" said Graham "you can get as angry as you like, It will not make any difference to anybody but you. So act your age and eat your veggies". And with that Graham walked back to the villager and told them how clever he had been.

"Marvellous" exclaimed the Mayor " If this works Graham I can see a promising future for your. In fact a position as head serf, become available earlier today. See me next week about applying". Said the Mayor.

"Sweetheart" said the Mayor to his wife my ideas seems to be working. I have bearded the dragon in his own den". Then picking up a carrot he strode to the mouth of the cave and said "dragon eat this". And pushed the carrot between the rocks.

"Dragons don't eat vegetables. We eat people!" roared the dragon furiously and clouds of black smoke billowed out from between the rock.

The Mayor moved back to the villager just a little too quickly to look dignified and said "Graham you are now in charge of the dragon problem. Get to it".

And so it was the next three days that Graham would visit the dragon's cave and drop carrots, lettuces, zucchinis, radishes and potatoes into the cave. And each day he would ask the dragon if he had eaten any vegetables today.

"Dragons don't eat vegetables. We eat people!" the dragon would roar but after the first day days his roar became a less fierce. After two days he sounded sad and

miserable and after three days his roar became a whisper. "Dragons don't eat vegetables" he muttered.

"Well perhaps you could try some just this once" said Graham in a soft and caring voice "I promise not to tell!"

"No!" said the dragon "Never! Never ever ever ever! Well maybe one carrot" Umm! Oh! Hey that tastes good" said the dragon "CRUNCH" Oh yes! My Oh My" Got any more? These are great. What do you know? "said the dragon . Dragons do eat vegetables!" If you remove the rocks I promise I will eat my vegetables from now on."

And that is how Graham had finally achieved his life's ambition. To have an idea and become important, become head serf and really feel like he had made a difference.

You know, that would be a good end to this tale However, on the very night when Graham was awarded his uniform and congratulated by the Mayor in front of all the villagers. The celebrations were cut short due to the fact that the dragon decided to eat Graham and swallow him down without a crunch.

"What on earth did you do that for?! Squealed the Mayoress. I thought that you ate vegetables now!"

"Oh I do I love vegetables, and from now on whenever I eat people I will always have them with vegies". Said the dragon as he turned on his leathery wings and swooped back down to the village for a late night snack.