

The Quest of Prince Frederick the Angelical

It was during the middle of the Middle Ages, years ago, in the very early springtime, when Prince Frederick the Angelical heard of his father's death. Prince Frederick (it would take too long to call him Angelical all the time) rushed from his own castle and to the bedside of his dead father.

"My Lord," said the First Minister of Rights, "My dear Lord, as your noble father is dead you are the new King. Following the usual customs you must go out into the world and seek adventure first. Please do try to kill a few dragons on your journeys."

"But I hate killing dragons!" exclaimed the Prince.

"How do you know, my Majesty, when you have never done it?" inquired the Second Minister of Rights.

"I just know."

"What must be done must be done," said the First Minister of Rights cheerily. "I assure you it is great fun!"

The next day Prince Frederick dressed in his armor, mounted his horse, and rode off to seek adventure. He looked back at the castle with longing. Its high turrets and winding staircases were so friendly. He sighed and continued onward.

Miles and miles away the evil Nutcracker Wormwood angrily gnashed his teeth.

“What can I do about that awful new Prince Frederick? I hate princes who come to seek adventure! All they do is grovel about the countryside trying to find adventure and disturb me. I hate each one more than the last!” He gnashed his teeth again. “I know! I’ll do what I always do to new princes who seek adventure; I’ll hire a dragon to kill him under the pretense of plundering the countryside. And then Prince Frederick will come to fight him and be killed,” He laughed horribly.

A year had passed, and Prince Frederick had searched the kingdom for dragons in every place except for Wormwood’s domain. When he heard a dragon called Smush was plundering the countryside in Wormwood’s area he wearily mounted his horse again and rode off to fight Smush.

He reached the area and looked about him. The area was a mess. Smush had killed hundreds of chickens and he ruined the countryside as well as he could according to Wormwood’s orders. He steeled himself to find Smush and destroy him as soon as possible (whether he hated it or not).

Smush sat in his dirty, little cave. He sighed as he waited for Prince Frederick to find him.

“I hate plundering countryside and killing princes. I wish Wormwood would stop making me do this!” he moaned. Suddenly he straightened. He heard a voice crying out, “O great dragon Smush, come out from where you hide and prepare to go to your death!” It was Prince Frederick. He didn’t know exactly how to call a dragon, so like a trumpet bearer he went

marching through the woods calling loudly for Smush. Smush groaned again and went out to meet the prince.

“What do you want?” he growled.

Frederick stared at him. He had never seen a dragon before. And Smush was a fantastic one. He had a long, scaly body and no wings because he was a Chinese dragon. His scales shone bright red, orange and green, flecked with gold. He was really quite majestic when he breathed fire from his mouth.



“I must kill you because the First and Second Ministers of Rights and all the people at the castle of my deceased father say that before I become king I must go out into the world and have adventures and kill dragons,” he said mournfully.

“And I was given orders by Wormwood to kill you because he hates princes and says you will ruin his kingdom,” proclaimed Smush.

“Who’s Wormwood?”

“Wormwood is the evil Nutcracker of this area. The people live in fear of him,” Smush said.

“Oh. I wish I didn’t have to kill you,” Prince Frederick said.

“And I wish I didn’t have to kill *you*.”

“Then don’t. I would rather not be killed,” Frederick said.

“Let’s make a deal. I won’t kill you if you don’t kill me,” Smush suggested.

“Okay,” Prince said rather doubtfully. He wasn’t sure if he could trust a dragon.

“Don’t worry. You can trust me,” said Smush.

“Will you tell me more about the evil Nutcracker, Wormwood?” asked the Prince.

“Sure,” agreed Smush. So he began to tell of Wormwood’s awful deeds, of the spells he made that could turn someone into a toad.

“Wait! Listen!” Frederick exclaimed.

Stomp. Stomp. Stomp. **Stomp.**

“It’s Wormwood!” cried Smush

STOMP



“Wormwood!” Smush dove into his cave.

Wormwood looked after him, "There he goes. It's too bad. I had a few things to say to him."

"W –What sort of things?" stammered the Prince. (The Nutcracker was quite terrifying.)

"Oh, a few lectures on betraying those who have helped him in need."

"He didn't need your help! You made him do it!"

Wormwood chuckled, "Perhaps, little boy."

That was too much for Prince Frederick the Angelical. He drew his sword, and with a fierce cry he flew at Wormwood the evil Nutcracker. Wormwood wasn't unprepared. He drew his sword and set about killing Frederick himself. They fought ferociously, but though Frederick might have been able to kill a dragon, he couldn't kill Wormwood. Suddenly, with a loud roar, Smush pounded out of the cave and attacked Wormwood. His fire scorched Wormwood, who of course was made of wood and wormy wood at that, and Wormwood was reduced to ashes. His evil reign was over.

Prince Frederick wiped his sword carefully and replaced it, "Thank you, Smush, I'm not sure I could have held out much longer."

"The prince who admits the truth is a real prince," said Smush gleefully. "Now how about we head back to that castle of yours."

A few weeks later Prince Frederick the Angelical and Smush arrived at Frederick's new castle.

"Are my eyes deceiving me? We heard you were dead!" exclaimed the First Minister of Rights.

“Indeed! Welcome back! But what is this? You brought back a *dragon!*” the Second Minister of Rights cried.

Prince Frederick replied loftily, “Oh, yes, this is Smush, the great Chinese dragon. But I’ll tell you about that later. First, I want a perfumed bath.”

The End