

The beautiful prince and the ugly dragons

Once upon a time there lived a king and his wife in a beautiful country. King Justin and Queen Helen had one son, prince Arthur, who they were very proud of. Prince Arthur was terribly good-looking, so much so that he was considered the most handsome man in the whole kingdom. He had just turned twenty-five and had won the national beauty contest for men for the past seven years. (He was so unbelievably good-looking that he was almost as handsome as the writer of this story. – See photo ☺) And was the prince also a fearless fighter? Well, no. He rather hated violence. Was he very clever then? Well, again no. He'd had average grades at school. But he loved dancing and was a wonderful dancer. He spent every Saturday evening at the royal disco dancing through the night. As you can imagine, the royal disco was always swarming with beautiful ladies who were lucky enough to get in. They all wanted prince Arthur to notice them. The prince, of course, loved beautiful ladies but he didn't want to get married just yet, however much his parents wanted to have grandchildren. He hated washing up and he heard that modern husbands have to help their wives with the housework. He said he didn't intend to get married until the royal scientists invented the royal dishwasher.

There also lived a very poor woman in the country. Her name was Linda. She had three daughters. Her youngest daughter, Grace, was nineteen, her middle daughter, Hazel, twenty-one, and her oldest daughter, Heather, was twenty-three years old. Just like all the other girls, Heather, Hazel and Grace also dreamed of marrying the king's son one day. But they were very poor (and had other problems, too). Most of the family were unemployed. The girls' father, Jack, didn't live with them because he was a terrible drunkard, who drank himself stupid every day and at such times he couldn't keep anything down, and it took quite some time to clean up after him. The mother and daughters grew tired of this and told him to live somewhere else.

Now, what were these daughters like? Heather, (the only one in the family who had a job) had a contract with the miners. She went down the coalmine and the coal came rushing up frightened to death by the horrible sight. So much about Heather's looks. When Hazel went out for a stroll, parents hid their children like mad because if small children set eyes on her, they got such a shock that they stopped growing. But they were really nothing compared to Grace.

She was so ugly she had to wear a thick veil at all times, even at home, because nobody could look at her face. Check this out:

One evening, at supper, a sudden gust of wind blew in through the open window and blew away her veil for a second.

As the family caught sight of her ugly face, they immediately tossed their cookies and had terrible nightmares (and the runs) for three days afterwards. Poor girls couldn't dance and they weren't too clever, either, except Grace, who was very smart. They were, on the other hand, masters of all housework, especially washing up and often sighed, "If I could have the beautiful prince, he would never have to wash up in his whole life".

They were also very well trained in many martial arts and apart from the ugliness of their faces, they had perfectly proportioned, beautiful and strong bodies. They were so good at fighting that whenever they went out into the street, hooligans in the village ran away screaming and hid wherever they could, they were so afraid of the girls.

This was because one beautiful starry night some years earlier when the girls were walking peacefully, watching the stars and dreaming about the prince (they had quite romantic souls) they bumped into some twenty hoodlums from the village. The boys didn't know them yet and immediately started to mock them. The girls asked the hooligans politely to leave them alone but it was to no avail. The hooligans kept on mocking them. This went on for a long time. Finally, the girls lost their cool and beat up the hooligans so badly that thirteen of them had to be taken to hospital. When they came out, they told the other tough guys in the village that the girls should be left alone.

And how come the girls were such formidable fighters? Well, it happened fourteen years earlier, when Grace, Hazel and Heather were still little girls. They loved wandering in the woods around the village.

On a sunny summer day, they walked much farther than usual and got to a place where they had never been before. They got so engrossed in chasing butterflies that they did not notice that evening was drawing near and it was quickly getting dark. By the time they looked round to find the way home it was so dark that they couldn't find the path. They weren't particularly frightened because they knew the animals of the forest and it wasn't very cold at night but they still wanted to get home. They looked round but all they could see was a little hut on top of a huge cliff with a dangerous narrow path leading up to it.

They started to climb the cliff without hesitation. When they got to the hut, they looked inside. There was a little old man wearing glasses sitting at a table reading a thick, leather-covered book ornamented with gold figures. They knocked and he came out. He greeted them warmly because he had lived alone for so many years that he had nearly forgotten what people looked like. He invited them for supper and they started talking. He showed his little hut to the girls and they were greatly surprised because the walls were covered with shiny, mysterious objects. They didn't know that the little old man was the world-famous and feared "Cross-Eyed Ninja".

He explained to them that the shiny objects were ancient ninja weapons. The little girls were very interested and asked him to let them play with the shiny thingies. At first, he didn't want to but he finally gave in, the little girls asked him so nicely. He showed them how to use the weapons and they tried them out. The girls liked the ninja stuff so much that from then on, they visited the Cross-Eyed Ninja nearly every day and he taught them everything he knew. Soon they were the best far and near. This is why the hoodlums were so afraid of them.

King Justin, Queen Helen and Prince Arthur lived happily until one day a terrible disaster struck. An awful dragon, Carla, and her teenage daughter, Doris, arrived and moved into a huge cave in the hill not far from the royal palace. They were quite fat dragons, Carla was about as big as a bus and weighed ten tons. Doris was roughly half her size and weighed five tons. When they arrived, they started eating up the animals of the forest: the deer, foxes, wolves, bugs, rabbits, rats, bears, roaches, polecats and mice, but the animals soon learnt to hide from the dragons and the dragons couldn't find enough food. Then they broke into gardens and farms and devoured horses, cows, cats, dogs, chickens, flies, mosquitos and other animals. The farmers were very angry but they didn't dare to say a word, they were so afraid of the dragons, who were not only very strong but had terrible claws and also breathed fire. They could set anything on fire in seconds and could take out a house from a hundred meters. Fortunately, Doris read somewhere that excessive consumption of meat is not very healthy so they started to eat grass. But peace didn't last long.

After two months, Doris conceived a terrible plan. She said to her mother:

"Mum, I'm a sexy young lady and I want to meet men."

They wrote a letter (full of grammar mistakes) to King Justin in which they demanded that a fine young man be sent to their cave every Sunday morning. They sure liked nice young men. The king couldn't do anything but obey. But he made an announcement on TV and on the radio that he would give his kingdom and half his son to anyone who bumps off the dragons. He also put a lot of ads in the papers, too. At once all the girls (and also some boys) stirred in the country and a stream of fighting amazons (and beautiful boys) started flowing like a mighty river towards the royal palace and Dragon Hill. But they all ended up flattened to pancakes, burnt to ashes or chewed to pieces. The dragons were merciless. All strong girls went to try their luck except our three beauties because they did not get wind of the competition, as they were so poor they had neither television nor radio, nor could they afford newspapers. But finally, King Justin put some ads in a free advertisement paper that everyone got, and so the three girls learnt about the challenge, too. Heather started preparing for the fight right away and on Sunday morning she went to take care of the dragons. She took her rusty Samurai sword from the Cross-Eyed Ninja and headed for Dragon Cave. When she got there, she shouted in: "Come out you ugly, dirty, big, fat pig of a dragon!"

Carla was very sensitive to criticism (especially about her figure) and rushed out at once, blowing fire. Heather jumped out of the way, swung her sword, and swish! – the dragon's rightmost head rolled in the sand. But the dragon blew such an inferno on the girl from her remaining six heads that she

immediately had to be taken to hospital and took two months to recover. The following weekend Hazel tried her luck. She managed to cut off the two leftmost heads of the dragon but this was still not enough and she shared the fate of her older sister and had to stay in hospital for three months. Now, the following weekend it was Grace's turn to go and fight the dragons. She knew she couldn't defeat them with just brute force because she was not as strong as her sisters and they were no match for the dragon, either. Her only chance was to use her brains. On Friday, she went to a bank in the capital and asked for a long-term loan. She then went to a special store hidden in a dark alley of the city and came home with a huge sack on her back. She didn't show the contents to anyone but left for the dragons' lair early next morning. When she got there, she also shouted in some insults to lure Carla out of her den. When she came out, she was violently taken aback by the sight (Grace had taken off her veil) but she pulled herself together and charged at the girl. Grace knew that using traditional methods she had about as much chance as a fart in a windstorm. So, when the dragon started blowing fire on her, she jumped out of the way, reached deep down into her sack and took out a huge fire-extinguisher. She aimed it at the dragon and covered her remaining four faces in so much sticky foam that the poor creature nearly suffocated. But the fight was not over yet. The infuriated dragon swung her powerful tail and tried to smash the girl to pieces. Grace jumped out of the way but the terrible tail cut two giant trees in half. Grace started running and Carla went after her. Unfortunately, the dragon was not only as big as a bus but was just as fast, too, and she was gaining on the girl. Grace noticed it, stopped, reached deep into her sack and pulled out a tripod similar to what photographers use, only a little bigger and stronger. The dragon thought the girl wanted to take her photo and started to smile, but continued to run nevertheless. Heather then quickly pulled out a heavy machine gun from her sack, set it up on the tripod and ra-ta-ta, shot all the dragon's heads off. The dragon had been running at such speed that she continued to slide downhill for another 200 metres. Doris heard that the noise was somewhat strange and certainly different from the familiar chewing noises accompanying her mother's victory every time she was attacked. She stuck out her head nervously but Grace didn't wait for her to make it out of the cave because the little dragon was even more dangerous than her mother. She was much faster and more agile. So, Grace quickly reached for her sack and fished out a neat bazooka. She carefully loaded it, knelt down, took aim and KABOOM! blew the cave and everything in it sky-high. The explosion was so strong that little particles of cave and dragon kept falling from the sky for half an hour afterwards. When she had wasted the dragons, Grace quickly put her veil back on and headed for the nearby royal palace triumphantly. The king and his court saw that the dragons fell and were all eager to see the mysterious amazon who had achieved what nobody had been able to before. They all ran down to welcome her. When they got there, they saw that her face was covered with a veil. King Justin asked her: "What do you want in return for taking care of the terrible dragons?" Grace answered: "Your son, of course, your majesty, and preferably also half the kingdom." The king asked: "And why are you wearing a veil?" Grace answered: "I cannot take it off, your majesty. It has been a tradition in our village for centuries that the groom can only take off the bride's veil after the wedding." The king was a little surprised, but as he saw the girl had a rather handsome figure (don't forget she was a trained ninja), he said nothing but called his son. The prince was also very curious and he, too, asked the girl to remove her veil. He got the same answer as his father. The prince grumbled a little but they set out for the church all the same. At the church the priest asked the girl: "Do you, Grace, take Prince Arthur as your lawful wedded husband to love and cherish in sickness and in health till death do you part?" "Of course, absolutely, definitely, positively yes, this is a dream come true", answered the girl excitedly. The priest also asked the prince: "Do you, Prince Arthur, take Grace as your lawful wedded wife to love and cherish in sickness and in health till death do you part?" "Well, it depends, let me think", answered the prince to gain time, then quickly jumped to the girl, lifted the veil and said: "Come what may, I cannot marry this chick till I see her face today." But perhaps he shouldn't have done this because the minute he set eyes on the girl's face, he instantly lapsed into a coma and it took the royal doctors more than half an hour to wake him with seventeen buckets of water. When he opened his eyes his first words were: "This ugly bat? Never in my life!"

Well, imagine, how the poor girl felt. Here she is, at her wedding, about to marry the man of her dreams, and then her prince says she's an ugly bat and he'll never marry her. She got so heartbroken that she nearly started to cry. She was so sad and confused she didn't really know what to do, and in her confusion, she tiptoed to the prince and gave him such a blow that he rolled under a bench fifteen metres away. The prince was not a very brave prince, and he called out from under the bench: "O.K. I'll marry you, just don't hit me".

And so finally they were married. But, as you can imagine, the prince was not too ecstatic about the idea. He didn't say a word to his new wife, just went into his room to sulk. Grace was not happy, either, because she loved the prince very much and it hurt her very much to see him sad. As she was very clever (she knew all the letters of the alphabet, even the rare ones), she took to the library and started looking for a cure for ugliness.

She read day and night, she read ninety-nine books on medicine, mysteries and magic, and finally in the hundredth book, on the hundredth page she found a magic recipe to turn herself beautiful. The recipe went like this: "If you bathe in dragon's blood, the uglier you were, the more beautiful you will be."

"Wow! This is what I need!", exclaimed the young bride. She remembered that she had left the body of the mother dragon untouched on the hillside. Although it was getting late (it was 1 a.m.), she couldn't wait, rushed into one of the bathrooms (the royal palace had twenty-three bathrooms), tore the bathtub out, picked it up, ran to the mother dragon's body, filled the tub with her blood, grabbed the tub, ran back to the bathroom (she was quite strong), put the bathtub back in place and jumped into it. She immediately turned into such a beautiful lady that nobody had seen before. The only problem was that the blood of the dragon was a bit smelly and she pretty much stank like blazes. So, without further ado, she rushed into another bathroom and had a big bath. When she finished, she was gorgeous and smelt like spring flowers (she used spring flower scented soap). She ran into her husband's bedroom (this was the first time she had ever been there) and woke him up. The prince rubbed his eyes, his mouth fell wide open and he couldn't find words for three minutes.

Then he stuttered: "Who are you, you vision of beauty? It is an unusual time and place to meet but I would sure like you to stay for a little hanky-panky."

"Don't you recognise me, darling? I'm Grace, your wife!", Grace answered and smiled.

"You? Grace? It can't be. She's as ugly as you are beautiful, although your voice sounds familiar."

"Yes, it's me, Grace, and I'd love to stay..."

And so she stayed. And three quarters of a year later she gave birth to beautiful twins. Later they had more children, six in all. Grace did not lose her beautiful figure, thanks to her rigorous training as a ninja. Of course, her sisters also bathed in the mother dragon's blood and became almost as beautiful as Grace. In fact, the three sisters won the first, second and third places in the national beauty contest for the following forty-five years. Heather and Hazel also found nice husbands. Hazel was married by the finance minister and Heather by the foreign minister (who were also very handsome). They invited the girls' mother to live with them in the palace, which she gladly accepted. They also invited the Cross-Eyed Ninja to the palace to be the royal trainer of the young princes.

He trained Grace's children and even Arthur a little bit. They didn't, of course, invite Jack, because they were afraid that under the influence he might get reacquainted with his breakfast, and rightly so. Instead, the prince bought him a house right next to the pub, so that he could get home, even on all fours, when he was particularly intoxicated, and also promised to pay for all his drinking in the pub.

And they all lived happily ever after. (Well, Jack lived happily for about seven more years, when he suddenly passed away due to alcohol poisoning.)

That's the end of the story. Hope you liked it. If you did, you can read it again.

P.S. The royal scientists soon invented the royal dishwasher.

