

Fire Island

"Run, they're coming after us," yelled Bobby as he rushed through the crowded village square.

Bobby was a small, nine year old boy who had rosy red cheeks and a mob of curls that hung down over his sticky out ears. He always had a cheeky grin and was known as a local petty thief. He was poor and lived on the streets of Derk.

Derk was a small village that was surrounded by farms and cliffs on the coast of Iguana. Smoke often blew over it from the nearby Fire Islands and the smell of salt filled the air. Unfortunately, the farms were poor and the ground didn't grow much. Squawking seagulls fighting over the few shellfish that clung to the nearby rocks was a sound the villagers were used to.



Huffing and puffing Bobby leant up against a door in a side alley leading off the village square. "Who are you hiding from?" whispered a nearby voice.

"Who's there?" demanded Bobby (a little frightened).

"It's me Jill," said the mystery voice. Bobby sighed with relief as Jill stepped out into the light.

Jill was close in age to Bobby and another orphan he often worked with stealing vegetables from the local farmers. She was as thin as a weed and had long, brown dirty hair that hung over her face. She wore ragged trousers which were tied at the waist by an

old piece of rope.

"I was down by the waves when I saw dragons flying towards the docks breathing fire, so I just ran," replied Bobby breathlessly.

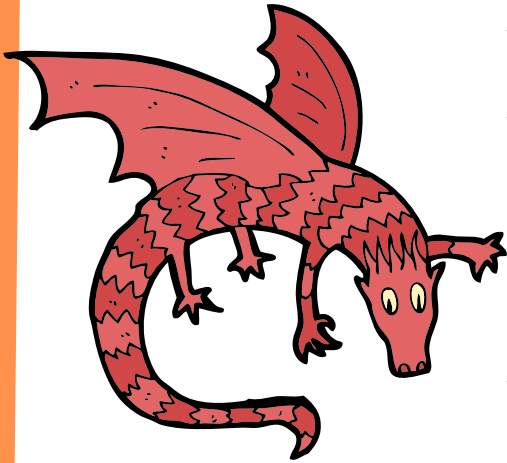
"Oh no," sobbed Jill. "I am afraid they are angry because I stole one of their golden eggs".

"Oh dear," said Bobby. "We will never be able to cross the sea to return it as they will burn us alive boat and all. We will need some help to fix this!"

The children walked for hours until they came to a cave on the edge of town. The silence inside the cave was punctured by a soft snoring sound. "Excuse me," whispered Bobby in a timid voice.

"Zzzzzz" echoed back at him from the depths of the cave. Bobby and Jill crept slowly forward towards the large snoring shape they could see in the gloom of the cave. The further they went inside the old, mossy cave, the more damp and cold the air became. In the dim light they could see a large scaly dragon surrounded by leaves so gently poked its foot.

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"Humpf...whose there?" roared a loud booming voice.

"It's me Bobby. Remember the boy who rescued you from the farmers trap 2 winters ago".

"Why, yes...I remember you" replied the now wide awake dragon. "Are you here for the reward I promised you".

"Well no, not exactly" replied Bobby. "We need your help." After explaining why the Fire Island dragons were now bombarding the village with fiery blasts, the children asked if the old dragon would help them sneak onto the Fire Islands. The plan was to return the stolen golden eggs back into the nest where Jill had taken it from.

"If I do this then my debt will be repaid to you boy" snorted the elderly dragon.

The next day, as the sun slowly rose into the blue cloudless sky and not a breathe of wind could be felt, Bobby and Jill clambered up onto the back of the ancient dragon. "Hold on tight" roared the dragon. Jill tightly gripped the golden egg to her chest. Whoosh...up into the air they climbed. They climbed so high in the air they were above the flight path of the Fire Island's dragons and were able to cross the sea unseen by their angry neighbours.

They landed softly on the hot rocks of the highest mountain in the middle of the Fire Islands. Jill snuck across the large boulders carefully balancing the large golden egg in one hand. She finally made it to the large empty nest surrounded by broken bits of pirate boats and old treasure chests. She gently popped the golden egg back where it belonged.

"Quick, let's go" she puffed as she leapt back on the dragon's scaly, leathery back. They all arrived safely back on Derk.

"Phew, that was scary," exclaimed Bobby.

"I hope you've learnt your lesson Jill about who not to steal from."

"Yip" she smiled. "I sure have - never steal from someone who can breathe fire, or fly!