

The secret of the two-headed dragon

The Czechoslovak fairy-tale about the fact that not only the dragon has two heads and one body.

Synopsis:

The royal children, Thomas and Barbara, were spending their summer holidays with their grandma and grandpa in the blacksmith's shop 'Under the Dragon Rock', near the Forget-me-not Meadow.

The small two-headed dragon, Smokey, was an unusual helper of the grandpa, the blacksmith.

The diversity of the personalities of this rather peculiar family member was obvious at first glance. One head was a vegetarian and the other was an omnivore; while one head was calm and reasonable, the other liked fun. However, despite the different features, they shared one body and one heart.

During dinner, the children persuaded their grandma and grandpa to let them stay with Smokey in his cave. Just before bedtime the children noticed an interesting map on the cave wall, which looked nothing like the current Dragon Kingdom. And so, Smokey began to tell the children the tale of two separate kingdoms, i.e. The Kingdom Above the Dragon Rock and The Kingdom Below the Dragon Rock, which, as a fixed boundary, used to divide the area of the Dragon Rock inhabited by the old great Dragon.

In the past, every kingdom had its own but very similar language. Sadly, the people of both kingdoms could meet only twice a year at the so-called 'Dragon Celebration', which was held on the day of the spring and autumn equinoxes. This was due to the curse imposed by the great Dragon. The people of both kingdoms were forbidden to visit or to marry one another. They could only meet on the day of the celebration. Everyone who joined the event had to wear a folk costume so that no one could see whether a person was of noble birth or rather poor. In this way, people became absolutely equal twice a year.

King Tadeus with Queen Elisabeth and King George with Queen Anna regularly shared their experiences at the Dragon Celebration. During their first celebration, their children, Prince John and Princess Adele, fell in love with each other.

Since the curse did not allow John and Adele to meet freely, they secretly met up at the Dragon Rock. One day they entered the Dragon Cave where they encountered the great Dragon. Although the Dragon was rumoured to be malicious, he surprisingly turned out to be quite nice and kind. He was not there alone, as Spitup, a human goblin, kept him company. Spitup hated people because they had humiliated him in the past.

To Spitup's disapproval, the Dragon often took Adele and John on secret trips. Once he told them about the dragon egg which Spitup had accidentally dropped into the river during the Dragon's trip back home from the other end of the world. From this egg a successor to the great Dragon was meant to hatch. However, the Dragon did not know that Spitup had dropped the egg on purpose. Fortunately, John managed to pull the dragon egg out of the deep river. They were so pleased when a little dragon emerged from the egg. Everyone was happy except for Spitup. Adele and John were so deeply moved when the egg cracked into two almost identical shell fragments that, there and then, they vowed to love each other for the rest of their lives.

The little dragon was completely different from the other dragons. It was considerably smaller and had two heads. Adele and John immediately made friends with the little dragon. They taught him their language and spent a lot of time together.

At Christmas, exactly on Christmas Eve, both Prince John and Princess Adele learned about the arranged marriages their parents were planning to organise for them. Due to the curse, they were to be married off to people they had never met before.

Adele and John confided in the Dragon, who presented them with strange gifts. He gave them a small bag containing a tooth which had not been cleaned for 100 years and some bristly dragon hairs. They both understood the purpose of the weird gifts when the suitors and suitresses arrived at both kingdoms. Thanks to the magical power of these Christmas gifts, the courtship failed, and Adele and John gained some more precious time for themselves.

When King George saw the beautiful couple in love during the spring Dragon Celebration, he had enough and decided to fight the dragon curse for the happiness of his son and Princess Adele. King Tadeus joined him. They were ready for the battle when the old Dragon suddenly appeared in the Forget-me-not Meadow. However, the Dragon mollified the fiery emotions, as there was a different and proper way to lift the curse, i.e. only a kiss of a royal couple that was willing to make a sacrifice for others and turn into blue forget-me-not flowers for eternity could remove the curse. And so it happened.

According to the curse, only a dragon whose life had been saved by people could help the prince and the princess return to their human form. The dragon also had to be able to fly to the Draco Constellation, break off the two most glowing stars and scatter their cosmic glow on the forget-me-not flowers. Just the little dragon, Smokey, could do this. He also helped the couple to regain their memory by reminding them of the happy moment of his birth and showing them his eggshells.

A large wedding was held. The old Dragon had gone to warmer climes for his well-deserved rest. He took Spitup with him to cheer the Dragon up and entertain all the retired dragons while performing some pole dancing. There was no bigger punishment for Spitup who hated dancing.

And that is the end of the story told by the dragon, Spitup, to the children. The attentive Barbara suddenly asked if Adele and John were their grandma and grandpa. When she spotted two identical fragments of the dragon eggshell on the cave shelf, it was clear that the two-headed dragon from the story was Spitup.

Spitup neither confirmed nor denied Adele's presumption, but when he put the children to bed and sat for a while in front of the cave, he saw the grandpa, the blacksmith and the grandma in the Forget-me-not Meadow lovingly holding each other's hands. They were wearing royal crowns made with woven forget-me-not flowers. They were Prince John and Princess Adele. And with this, the story of our heroes comes to a close.