

*Adapted from the story by Robert N. Munsch*

Once upon a time there was a young prince called Roland, who lived in the same castle as the Princess Elizabeth. The children had different parents but they always played together and learned together. They both wore rich clothes and had the same toys and the same teachers, and everyone knew that when they grew up they would marry each other.

But one day a dragon appeared from the forest and blew away the castle, in one fiery breath. He captured Prince Roland and flew with him, back to his mountain eyrie. Princess Elizabeth picked herself up, dusted herself down, and resolved to rescue Roland. But first, she had to find something to wear.... everything had been burned up in the fire of the dragon's breath.

Luckily she found a big paper bag, which she pulled over her head and wore as a dress. Then without further ado, she set off through the forest, following the dragon's smouldering tracks, to rescue the prince from his fate.

She travelled a long way, through many hardships, but eventually she reached the dragon's lair and banged bravely on the door. A little window opened and the dragon's big eye peered out.

"What are you doing here, little girl?" he asked. "You are very lucky I've just had my breakfast or I might decide to have toasted princess for lunch."

Princess Elizabeth refused to be frightened by his threat. Instead she said, "Hallo Dragon. My name is Elizabeth and I have heard a lot about you.

"Tell me, is it true that you can destroy five big forests with one fiery breath?"

The dragon preened himself and said coyly, "I can do more than that!"

"Oh," said Elizabeth, breathlessly. "Could you show me?"

The dragon stirred, opened the gate and stuck his nose out. He took a deep breath and whooshed a river of flame and.... yes, *seven* big forests were destroyed all at once.

"Oh, that was wonderful," moaned Elizabeth. "I don't suppose you could do it again?"

And the dragon did do it again, burning up another set of forests with the last of his fiery breath.

"Ah, magnificent," breathed Elizabeth.

“And tell me, Mr Dragon, is it really true that you can fly around the world in just five minutes?”

“Yes, of course,” said the dragon. “I suppose you want to see that, too.”

And so he set off, flapping his wings, to return from the opposite direction just five minutes later.

“Oh, that was won-der-ful,” Elizabeth gushed. “I wonder, could you do *that* again?”

Once more the dragon set off, a little bit more slowly this time. When he returned he landed heavily, rolled over and went straight to sleep. Elizabeth approached him carefully, lifted one eyelid to check that he was really asleep, then climbed right over him, straight into the fortress to find Roland.

“There you are!,” she said, excitedly, when she found the prince unharmed, still looking magnificent in his velvet jacket. But she didn’t get the welcome she expected.

“*Elizabeth!*” said the prince in a disapproving voice. “*Look* at you! You’re all covered in ashes – and what is that dreadful thing you’re wearing! Go and get dressed properly before you approach me!”

“Roland,” said the princess, “you’re a toad! And I’m not going to marry you, after all!”

So Princess Elizabeth and Prince Roland didn’t get married and live happily ever after.

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