

Weekly Pawmpt

By Shiloh Skye

Prompt: Write a story where the dragon saves a princess of another species.



A dragon being sent to slay a dragon to rescue a dragon.

A snort echoed inside my steel helm at the momentary thought. As quick as it had come, the thought was gone, and I regained my focus. I tightened my grasp on the haft of my spear, held it point-forward at the big, scaly beast, spreading out my wings to make the threatening display more... dramatic? Convincing? I suppose it just made me feel more confident.

“I am Sir Reynold of Wyrms Rest, and I have come to slay thee, monster!”

In response, the beastly dragon splayed its own scaly wings, which spanned so far as to graze their thorny tips on the walls of the cavern. Those wings, perhaps ten times more massive than my own, made me feel proud of myself for not immediately curling into an armored ball and cowering in terror. That may have been the true test of a knight: charging into battles no self-respecting gambler would ever wager their coin on, against all rational logic. For glory, for honor, and of course, for beautiful women.

I charged. When the dragon slammed a front leg down to crush me, I dodged out of the way, the heaviness of my armor slowing me enough so that the beast’s claws only missed me by a handbreadth. Its claws pierced the cavern’s stone floor and shattered stalagmites, sending out rocky shrapnel that battered my plate. I thrust my spear at the dragon’s shoulder, aiming for the pit where it had no armored scales, but its arm swept across the ground and smacked into me, sending me flying amidst a rain of rocks. My steel took most of the blow, and I managed to keep hold of the spear. I jumped up and ran at the beast again. Without even thinking, I did something absurd.

The dragon’s hit had landed me at its tail. I jumped on, spreading my wings for balance, running up the monster’s back before there was a chance for thought to set me off balance. The dragon reacted almost immediately. It whipped around. I launched myself. It twisted its head around on its long neck to bite. I pulled back my spear. It opened its mouth. I thrust it forward with everything I had.

The spear slipped between the dragon's razor teeth. It burrowed into the roof of its mouth. Hooked into the flesh. I wrenched its head down where I landed and thrust forward again, burying the spear deeper. The dragon reared, ripping the spear from my gauntlets and letting out a screaming roar that I barely heard through the adrenaline. Fire burst forth from the dragon's mouth. It swung wildly, forcing me to dodge and hide behind a cairn-like tower of rocks. The scream took on a choking sound as the dragonbane poison on the spear took effect, and then it crumpled to the ground, and it died.

I struggled to reign in my heavy breathing as the big lizard breathed its last. Finally safe, I unbuckled and tore off my helm, doubled over, and vomited all my adrenaline out onto the cavern floor. The gross, acidic taste of fear-laden breakfast coated my mouth.

"Bleh," I groaned in disgust. I wiped my mouth clean with the collar of my arming cap, cleared my throat, and spoke to myself. "Now where is that damnable princess?"

It took a while to find her in the labyrinthian cavern, but at least there were enough holes in the ceiling to let the sunlight in and keep me from getting lost in the dark. Finally, it occurred to me to call out.

"Hello?" I shouted at the intersection of three passages. "Is there a fair maiden in here anywhere?" The echo of my voice faded into the depths, and another echo replaced it.

"Quite presumptuous to assume I'm 'fair' when you haven't even met me, isn't it?" Called a voice—a distinctly unfeminine voice.

I frowned and stepped into the third tunnel where the voice had come from. I turned a corner, and there with arms crossed in a huff sat, not a princess, but a young man.

"Ah, well, I suppose I can rescue you too. Bit of a third wheel, though. Where is the princess then?" I asked.

"You're looking at her," the man said, rolling his eyes. "Prince Theo of Arlina. No doubt father said I was a maiden to put some motivation behind that spear." Prince Theo shrugged. "Sorry to disappoint."

I stared, the gears in my head processing the deception. I squinted as I took a closer look at the prince.

"Wait a minute... you're not even a dragon!"

"I'm a *Komodo* dragon."

"Fool's gold."

"Oh come on!"

The prince threw his arms up in frustration and scoffed. "You still want to save me? Or am I finding my own way out?"

I blinked, coming to my senses and waving my gauntleted hand. "No, no, I'm sorry. I was just taken off guard. That's all." I looked the prince up and down as he stood up. The (clearly adopted) prince may not have been a woman, but he had such feminine curves, and his garments were tailored tight to accentuate them. The petite lizard may have lacked any glorious wings, but I dare say I had never seen any dragon so...

"Excuse me," I said as the prince passed me by. "I believe it is customary for one's rescuer to receive... a kiss."

The prince stopped in his tracks and looked back. "Wait, seriously?" he asked. "You're..."

"I swing both ways," I shrugged, eyeing him cautiously. "Do you... swing both ways too?"

The prince paused, staring at me as if I were some sort of buffoon. But soon, a laugh escaped the prince's lips, and suddenly he was doubling over in a fit of uproarious laughter.

I shot him a look, and he regained his composure.

"Oh, sir knight, my apologies. I swing only one way."

I was nearly ready to indeed leave the prince behind for such a bigoted display, but he approached and put a clawed hand on my breastplate. "Lucky for you, it's the scandalous one." The prince kissed me, and he was not one to kiss lightly. He pushed against me, his tongue briefly slipping into my maw to explore, but he stopped suddenly and drew back. The lizard cleared his throat and wiped his mouth on his sleeve. He sucked air through his teeth.

"You um... you taste like."

And that's when I remembered the vomit.

THE END