

Dragonlore

Talon huffed a hot spark from one nostril into the huge, stone, fireplace and watched the wood flame. He smiled at the rustle of hatchlings' scales and wings, settling into place for his special story.

"Once upon a time, when I was only two thousand years old, I grew tired of eating tinned meat called knights who attacked me with spears and swords. I had tried to settle down, first in Scotland. You may have heard of the Loch Ness Monster.

Secondly, in Derbyshire, where they still sing about the Lampton Worm. Eventually I found my perfect cave where I was left alone. That was the Era of Meals on Wheels, or as you all know it Humans in Cars." Talon paused, staring into the fire glow until a hatchling hiccupped a flame, lightly scorching a nearby scale or two.

"What I didn't know was humans were already telling stories of danger and death in the darkness. Perhaps I had been careless." Talon shrugged. "One night, very late, Jamie burst into my home. He stood in the centre of the cave, glaring through his tears. 'Go on then, do your worst,' he shouted at me. 'I don't care! Being eaten by you would be better than living.' He stood there, chest heaving, defiant to the end." Talon shook his head and blinked rapidly. The closest hatchlings noticed a wisp of steam rising from his eyes. "I am not hungry, I told him, then lay down and closed my eyes. Eventually he came and curled up between my arms to keep warm. I asked him what he was and he told me, 'Jamie and I am a boy.' I was shocked when he explained what a boy was. I had never realised humans had hatchlings too. Jamie told me his mother had moved them to a neighbourhood where a gang of boys bullied and beat him. They had dragged him to my cave and pushed him in. Finally he slept but I was too angry to sleep and, for the rest of the night, thought about the boys and, strangely, Meals on Wheels.

Near dawn, we woke to noises outside the cave. His tormentors had returned, looking for his body. We crept out behind them into the fog shrouded morning. Gently, I thought, I tapped one of the gang, on the shoulder, and he fell down. I held him down with my claws, then stamped the ground and roared. The earth shook and a column of fire lanced skyward. The gang ran screaming except for my prisoner. I gave him to Jamie for punishment.

From that day, Jamie and I became the best of friends. He grew into a man but never forgot our friendship. Jamie Green was the one who brought together human and dragon to live together peacefully side-by-side, accepting our differences. We supply dragon-gold and they allow us to hunt in certain areas.” Talon smiled at the hatchlings wide-eyed wonder. “Of course, we don’t hunt humans anymore.”