

## **A Montgomeryshire Fairy Tale**

### **Bethan Hughes**

I felt myself falling, and then falling some more. Air rushing past my ears, stinging my eyes. A feeling of deep fear washed over my body as I saw what looked to be a floor fast approaching. I closed my eyes and waited for it to end.

Slowly I opened my eyes and felt a mossy ground beneath me, I sighed, thanking an unknown force. My body ached and my head felt heavy, but I was alive. After lying there for a short while, a noise nearby made me leap to my feet, suddenly realising I didn't know where I was. Looking around I saw I was in a forest bathed in a deep violet glow. The forest terrified me but I felt an unusual sense of comfort from the purple colour, whatever it was.

As I took my first step forward into the forest a strong gust of wind pushed me forward as if urging, no, daring me to enter. I took its invitation and confidently made my way in, hiding that my insides were screaming at me to not trust anything.

After walking around for what seemed like forever, I heard a growl from the bushes of the overgrown path I had found. I stumbled to a stop and scanned my surroundings, panic setting in my chest. Slowly a black wolf twice my size padded out from the over growth and set its piercing yellow eyes in my direction. I felt a lump in my throat start to form and my eyes blur. Cursing, I wiped my eyes with my sleeve and looked back up at what I can only assume to be my foe. Unfortunately, the beast had already started charging towards me, and I opened my mouth to scream, but not even a whimper left my throat. As the wolf approached at lightning speed all I felt was defeat. However the same gust of wind I felt earlier forced me down onto the ground and the wolf ran straight through where I was just stood and over the top of me. I relaxed but realised I shouldn't have soon after, as the wolf skidded to a stop and whipped its bear like head back round at me. It was closer than before, meaning I could see each individual razor sharp tooth jutting in and out of its mouth.

Thinking that no more luck would come my way I closed my eyes and waited for the end to come, like I had done so many times before.

A giant whooshing noise like wings started to get closer behind me and when I realised I hadn't been torn apart, I let myself peak at what was happening. I heard the wolf whimper and saw it run away from me, with its tail between its legs. As I finally completely relaxed, all of my adrenaline suddenly left my body and I could feel myself fading, but not before I saw a giant purple figure, the

same colour as the forest, land gently on the ground in front of me. The moment was magical but short lived, as before I could get a good look at it, I faded out completely and my head hit the ground.

This time when I woke up I felt revitalised and could focus on my new surroundings easier. I had somehow been moved from the dark forest to a beautifully lit cave with purple amethyst gems littering the naturally formed walls. I turned around and saw a waterfall, bringing life to the cave. This however wasn't what kept my attention. Drinking from the pool formed at the bottom of the waterfall was the most captivatingly terrifying creature I had ever seen. A dragon.

Its violet scales rippled against its skin with every movement, as if not attached to the body. Its monstrous head moved surprisingly smoothly side to side as an open mouth lapped up the water, gallons at a time. However the most impressive thing about the mysterious creature crouched merely metres away from me was the glistening wings that seemed to be pulsating with magic. I felt so overwhelmed by the sight in front of me I thought I might pass out again, but at this moment, as if the dragon had read my mind, it spoke to me, snapping me out of my daze.

"I see you have awoken, young one", He said, peering at me with old eyes. They were a bright green with hints of wisdom and youth rolled together.

"You seem to be having some trouble leaving this land of danger. Would you like some guidance?" He asked me, a surprisingly clear inquiring look was on his face.

In reply all I did was simply nod, thankful for the help but still very much overwhelmed.

He crouched down and let one of his wings lie flat on the ground. He tilted his head back towards his wing, indicating for me to climb on. I pushed myself up off the ground with new found strength and clambered onto his back. It was unexpectedly smooth as his scales flattened out once they came into contact with my hand.

"Hold on" was all I heard him say in a gruff voice before I realised we had started to rise off the floor of the cave and up towards a large gap in the roof. I closed my eyes tightly, partly because of fear and partly to check if this was real or not. When I opened my eyes and saw passing clouds I realised this may be more real than I thought. I dared to look over the edge of the dragon's body and down onto the canopy of tree tops of the forest. I saw a purple mist

radiating off the trees and smiled realising I was being watched over the entire time.

After flying for a while, the dragon started descending and gently touched down in front of another cave entrance. I confidently jumped off his back and felt thankful for his help. I walked towards the cave and looked back catching one last glimpse at my magical companion. I took a step into the cave and felt an up draught.

"See you soon" was all I heard before I was cast upwards quickly, giving me no time to think about what he meant.

I saw a bright light above me and watched as it approached. I felt calm, as if knowing it was something good. Getting close, I closed my eyes and waited.

3...2...1...

"And awake..." My eyes slowly opened, readjusting to the bright room.

I looked around and my memory came flooding back to me. I remember being recommended therapy, I remember the panic as I walked into therapy for the first time and I remember the calming voice of my therapist. I then looked up into familiar eyes,

green, with wisdom and youth rolled into one. My therapist, my dragon.

"How do you feel?" His question resonated with me for a while.

"Good" I finally say, smiling, knowing I have felt this way in a while.

"Good" he echoed me, and relaxed into his seat. "This concludes our first session together; I look forward to seeing you again next week. You did well" He smiled, indicating it was okay for me to leave.

I grabbed my bag and walked out the door and closing it begins me. I stood there for a second and turned around, looking at the nameplate fastened to the door. 'Dr. Dewi'. I chuckled to myself, what a weird name.

I walked away and thought about my experience. I'm glad I got advised by my school counselor that even though I may have been scared of my mental health, I shouldn't be scared of the people who are prepared to help. It gave me the confidence to get help, at a time when I needed it most.