



# The Dragon and the Coffee Pot

A Story by Manfred Kyber

Translated by J. Heinrich Arnold • Illustrated by Hannah Marsden

**I**n a large, deep forest a long time ago, there lived a terrible dragon. He spat poison and he breathed fire from the holes in his nose. He ate people and animals in a way that was sad to see. Dragons are most unfriendly beings who spit poison and eat people and animals. Because of all this, we should not be too surprised that this dragon did the same, for he had no better education than this – and the education of a dragon is not sufficient for a decent life.

It surely was not pleasant to see him sitting there in the forest eating everything that came his way. He only left the bones. Actually, he spat them out and left them lying around the place in a most disorderly fashion. It was a miserable sight and the people of the area were not at all satisfied with the situation.

One day, a little girl went into this forest to find some berries. Her search led her deeper and deeper into the forest. It was already quite late by the time the girl noticed that she should have been home a long time ago. The darkness was creeping in, and the trees had long, dark shadows. Far away, the girl could hear the church bell of her village. The sound gave her a shock. She was only a very little girl, and she decided to go home fast. She knew that the shortest

way would lead her past the home of the dragon. She thought she had to take the shortest way because night was coming fast, and she was afraid of the darkness.

The little girl knew that her parents were waiting at home and that her mother would be worried about her. That is why she decided to go the shortest way. She asked her guardian angel to protect her when she passed near the home of the dragon. She had only just thought of her guardian angel when he already stood next to her.

“Good evening,” he said, “the way you go is the path on which the dragon sits.”

“I know, I know,” said the little girl. “I also know that he is unfriendly and that he eats men and animals, that he spits poison, and that he breathes fire. All this is not nice, but I have to go this way, otherwise I will come home too late. I thought you would protect me in any case.”

“This I will do,” said the angel, “and I will watch over you, and the dragon will not be able to harm you. But you will see him, if you go this way, and it will be a horrible and shocking sight. Because of this I would prefer it if you would choose a different way.”

“I would like to be home before dark, and since you will protect me, it will be all right,” said the little girl. “Perhaps the dragon went for a little walk, and perhaps he is not at home. Then I would not even see him.”

“So many people who walk on the road of the dragon say the same thing,” said the angel, “but the dragon has not gone for a walk. He sits where he always sits, and if



you go this way against my advice, then you will see him.”

“That is not good,” said the little girl. “What shall I do?”

“You must think of your angel, and you should have no fear,” said the angel. “Look here, little child, people should never fear dragons. If people would have no fear, then the dragons would become quite small. Then it would not help them a bit that they spit poison and breathe fire.”

“I will try to do that. I will think of you, and I will have no fear,” said the little girl.

And that is how she walked into the darkness of the forest. The angel disappeared, and the girl felt quite alone. In reality, the angel never left the girl, but she could not see him anymore. It did not take very long before the little girl heard a coughing and a blowing of the nose going on in a most impolite manner.

It was the dragon who spat poison and breathed fire. When the little girl came around the corner, she saw the dragon sitting there on the ground. He was constantly hitting the ground with his ugly tail. On his short clumsy feet were long claws. He was busy just spitting poison and breathing fire, which came out of the holes of his nose. Around the dragon were strewn the bones of many animals. This surely looked disorderly and most distasteful.

The little girl had a shock, but she thought of the angel and tried not to have fear. But it did not seem to work so well.

“It is not nice, the way you behave,” said the little girl. “Let me pass by.”

“I will not let you pass,” said the dragon, and he lay down directly in the path which the girl had to take.

“I will talk with him a little,” thought the girl. “Perhaps he will become more reasonable and allow me to pass by. He cannot harm me anyway, because my angel told me so.”





“Tell me,  
why do you eat  
people?” asked  
the little girl.

“Do you  
think that  
is good  
manners?  
Or is it  
nice if  
everyone

fears you? Can't you eat potato soup? You would only need to put the soup pot on one of the holes in your nose, and the soup would be ready in half an hour. You don't even have to do the work we do to cook our soup.”

“Potato soup?” asked the dragon. And he smiled in a very distasteful way, for in smiling he showed his teeth. Just one of his teeth would have been enough to scare a strong man. Potato soup had never been offered to that dragon before.

“Yes, potato soup,” said the little girl. “Potato soup is something fine. It is a sign of poor upbringing that you don't like it. You can also drink coffee and have my cookies. I still have coffee in my jug and cookies in my basket. I'll put both here and you can have them. But you have to let me pass by.”

“I will eat you,” said the dragon.

“Under no circumstances,” said the little girl. “You cannot do that because my angel will not give you permission.”

“I will not ask your angel,” said the dragon.

“Maybe he won't ask the angel after all,” thought the little girl, and fear came over her.

“Look how I can flap my wings,” said the dragon. “I'll take you into the air.”

“You surely cannot fly,” said the little girl. “To be able to fly you would have to be a bird or an angel. You do not have real wings. Your wings are short, and they're not even beautiful.”

The dragon did not like this at all, because dragons want to be respected. They cannot laugh about themselves. He looked with horrible eyes at the little girl. The little girl's heart was beating like a hammer, but she did not want to be afraid because the angel had told her not to.

“Look how I can use my haunches,” said the dragon. “I only need to make one jump, and I’ll have you.”

“That would be a sign of poor upbringing,” said the girl, but she put her hands on her heart and called for her angel.

Suddenly the angel appeared, and around him were many other angels. They did not allow the dragon to come close to the girl. The girl no longer had any fear at all, and suddenly it seemed as if the dragon became smaller and smaller.

“You with your short clumsy legs of a dachshund,” said the girl, “you’re uneducated! Don’t you see the angels around me? How will you be able to come close to me? Drink the coffee and eat the cookies and learn to behave properly.”

When the little girl had said this, the angels disappeared, and the forest became quite dark. The dragon, however, had become quite small. He had put the coffee pot on his nose to warm the coffee a little. He almost looked like a little dachshund, and the girl had a good laugh.



“Do you like it?” the girl asked the dragon. For the coffee had begun to boil and steam on the nose of the dragon. The dragon had a good warm meal. The girl took the coffee pot, said good night, and went home.

The bells of the church were still ringing because it had only been a short time that the girl was with the dragon. This is always true when we experience something great.

From that time on, both people and animals were saved from that dragon. He remained as small as a dachshund and he lived on potato soup.

There are many roads in life that lead close to a dangerous dragon. It is of greatest importance at such times to think of our guardian angels. Then the most dangerous dragon becomes quite small, like a little dog, and eats only potato soup.





## About the Author

Manfred Kyber (1880–1933) was a Baltic poet best known for his animal fables. Born in Riga, he moved to Germany to work as a writer and became a pioneering advocate for the ethical treatment of animals.

