

Dragobert the Dragon

By Mrs and Mr Sproulle



Illustration by Anabela Pinto

DRAGOBERT THE DRAGON (by Mrs and Mr Sproulle)

It was in the large, magnificent banqueting hall that the King held his meeting.

“My daughter, Princess Marguerite, has been kidnapped by evil Sir Roderick the Rotten and his nasty brother, Sir Stanwyck the Stinker. Who will save her?”

“I will!” shouted Sir Bostwick the Boastful.

“No, I will!” shouted Sir Brian the Bragger.

Sir Egbert the Egoist and Sir Alnwick the Arrogant insisted that they were the knights for the job. Only Sir Gwain the Gentle, at the foot of the table, had kept quiet. He was too shy and much too nice to boast or brag and had no idea how he would go about saving a princess.

After their meeting the feasting started, the merriment, the singing and playing the lute. And then the King and the knights fell asleep.

Sir Gwain crept out of the banqueting hall, mounted his trusty steed and rode up the mountain to find his friend, Dragobert the Dragon.

He was not supposed to have a dragon as a friend since all the villagers were terrified of dragons and all the knights wanted to prove how brave they were and fight them. But Dragobert had saved Sir Gwain from many dangers and had given him good advice in the past. Maybe he would know what to do now.

Up, up, up, Sir Gwain climbed to the cave where the Dragon lived.
“Dragobert!” he called. “Are you home? I need your help!”

A sleepy snort answered him. “Why hello, Sir Gwain! How very nice of you to call!” Dragobert did not breathe fire this time. He kept that for really nasty knights.

"I need your help, Dragobert. Sir Roderick the Rotten has kidnapped Princess Marguerite and the King wants us to rescue her. The other knights have eaten too much and fallen asleep so it's up to me."

"Let me think," said Dragobert, scratching his horned head with his clawed toes. "You could undermine the walls by digging underneath. Then they would collapse. But, I suppose, you haven't got any men to do the digging?"

Sir Gwain shook his head.

"Or you could use a trebuchet and send rocks flying at the walls and punch holes in them. But you haven't got a trebuchet, have you?"

Again Sir Gwain shook his head. "It is only I and my horse."

"Well, it sounds like you are going to need my help. Wait here."

Dragobert put out his impressive wings, waved his barbed tail and set out for the castle. The Dragon swooped down, swirled overhead, had a good look and reported back to Sir Gwain.

"It seems that every day at 8 o'clock the drawbridge is lowered and the soldiers ride out. They spend the morning raiding the countryside and taxing the peasants. Only the guards are left on the turrets."

"But," and the Dragon gave a toothy grin, "Princess Marguerite is allowed every morning to walk along the battlements. She looks very sad and I know she's longing to be rescued so I'm going to help you."

The two friends decided to hide in the bushes below the castle and observe the turrets. They knew that the slits allowed the soldiers to shoot their crossbows at any passersby on the ground and that the moat was too wide to cross. So what were they going to do? They would just have to wait.

Suddenly they heard a rattling of chains and saw the drawbridge being lowered. Sir Roderick's soldiers thundered across, waving their lances and swords. Now was the time.

"Quickly!" whispered Dragobert. "Run through the gate to the keep and climb to the battlement. I will fly up and meet you there. We'll wait for Princess Marguerite and then escape!"

Sir Gwain did as he was instructed. Crouching low, he ran past the guards having their breakfast. He reached the keep and tried the heavy, wooden door. It was locked!

“Dragobert! Help!” he hissed. “It’s locked! How do I reach the battlements?”

The dragon gave his toothy grin and waved the key to the keep. “Look what I found!” Quickly he unlocked the door and Sir Gwain raced up the stone steps. He reached the battlements and crouched by the wall of the nearest turret.

Soon, the Knight heard the sweet voice of the Princess singing to herself. Then she appeared. She was the most beautiful princess he had ever seen and he was determined to rescue her. But where was Dragobert?

A whoosh of wings, a cheerful “Hallo below!” announced the Dragon’s arrival. He perched on top of the turret and winked at Sir Gwain.

But they had not prepared for the fact that the Princess might be frightened of dragons. And they were certainly not prepared for the fact that she would scream! And scream she did, very loudly! Sir Gwain rushed to her side, catching her as she collapsed.

“Who are you?” she gasped, holding on to him.

“I am Sir Gwain and I have come to rescue you!”

“My hero!” she sighed.

Dragobert gave a low cough.

“Oh!” said Sir Gwain. “Where are my manners? Let me introduce you to my friend, Dragobert the Dragon. We have come to rescue you.”

The Princess did not have time to ask how this would be possible. Just then the guards appeared on their turrets and shouted. “Stop! The Princess is getting away! And there’s a dragon!”

Dragobert sprang into action. “Quickly, Sir Gwain! Quickly, Your Highness! Jump on my back and hold on!”

The Knight helped the Princess onto the Dragon's back and they both clutched tightly to Dragobert's curved scales. Soon they were swooping over the battlements, past the turrets, out of range of the crossbows.

It was a thrilling ride and Princess Marguerite held on to Sir Gwain who held on to her. All too soon it was over and Dragobert set them down gently in front of her father's castle. She thanked the Dragon, hoped they would meet again, then Princess and Knight entered the castle.

Dragobert looked after them, glad to have been of service and then returned to his mountain cave.

The King was delighted that his daughter was returned to him. The other knights were angry that they hadn't been the ones to rescue her. Sir Gwain said modestly, "Really, it was nothing. I was glad to do my duty."

You can guess how the story ended: the Princess married the Knight and they - and Dragobert the Dragon - lived happily ever after.