

### **(3) The Friendly Dragon**

Deep in a dark, cold cave lived a large dragon named Toby. Toby was covered in bright green scales and had a long, powerful tail. Most dragons in the ancient stories liked to roar and breathe hot fire to scare people away. They guarded piles of stolen gold and sparkling jewels. However, Toby was quite different from the others. Toby strongly disliked breathing fire because it made his throat feel dry and hurt. Instead, he had a secret passion for baking. He spent his quiet afternoons wearing a stained white apron, carefully mixing flour, sugar, and rich cocoa in a giant stone bowl. His greatest dream was to become the most talented baker in the entire kingdom.

One sunny morning, a curious girl named Lily was walking through the woods. Suddenly, she smelled something good in the air. "That smells just like fresh chocolate cake!" Lily said to herself. She followed the sweet smell all the way to the entrance of Toby's cave. Because Lily was a brave girl, she walked into the cave.

Suddenly, a big shadow appeared against the walls. She looked up and saw Toby holding a giant wooden mixing spoon. Lily's heart began to pound against her ribs. "Oh my! Are you going to eat me?" Lily asked in a small, shaking voice. And she quickly hid behind a large rock.

Toby looked down and blinked his big golden eyes. He looked surprised. "Eat you?" Toby asked. He shook his head so hard that his tall chef's hat nearly fell off. "Certainly not! I am a professional baker, not a hungry monster. Actually, I was hoping to share this fresh chocolate cake with a guest. It has just finished cooling."

Lily stepped out from the rock, her eyes wide with wonder. She spotted a beautiful cake on a stone table. It was covered in sweet frosting and berries. "A dragon that enjoys baking? That is amazing!" Lily shouted with delight. She took a seat on a stone chair, and Toby offered her a slice of cake. It was the most delicious

treat she had ever tasted.

"Why do you live all alone in this cave?" Lily asked curiously. Toby looked at the floor and sighed. A little puff of smoke came out of his nose. "Everyone in the village thinks I am scary," Toby said sadly. "When they see me, they run away and scream. They think I want to burn their houses. But I don't want to hurt anyone. I just want to make friends and share my sweets."

Lily felt very sorry for the dragon. She stood up and patted Toby's giant green hand. "I am not scared of you, Toby. You are the kindest dragon I know," Lily said with a smile. "I have an idea! Why don't you bring your cakes to the village festival tomorrow? If they taste your baking, they will see how nice you are." Toby's wings flapped with excitement. "Do you really think they will like me?" he asked. "I know they will!" Lily promised.

The next day, Toby and Lily walked into the village together. At first, the people were afraid. But when Toby handed out his chocolate cakes and strawberry pies, everyone stopped running. Soon, the whole village was laughing and eating with the friendly dragon. Toby was never lonely again, and he became the most famous baker in the land.