

The Adventures of Sir Derek, the Gold Dragon

Once, long ago and far away in a magical kingdom called Perelandria, there was a good and wise and kind king named Worgold. Now the people of Perelandria all loved good King Worgold, all that is except for the evil Baron Snotnose. Baron Snotnose was jealous of the king, he felt that he should be the king. He thought that the king's power and riches and the love of the people should be his, instead of King Worgold's. But even if he were the king, the people would not love him because he was not a nice or lovable person.

Now old Snotnose was always thinking and planning and plotting how he could get rid of Good King Worgold and become king. Finally, Baron Snotnose came up with a plan that he thought would work. In another land, even further away, there lived an evil sorcerer named Scumbucket.

Scumbucket was a very evil and mean person. The meaner something was, the better he liked it. Everyone in the land where Scumbucket lived was afraid of him. He could turn someone into a frog, or give them measles and chicken pox at the same time just by blinking his left eye. And a lot of times, he did things like that just for fun.

So Baron Snotnose thought that he could hire Scumbucket to come to Perelandria and work for him. He thought that if Scumbucket were to start casting evil spells and making things go wrong, that the people would stop loving Good King Worgold, and that the king would be spending all of his money trying to fix things and then Snotnose would be

able to get rid of the king and become king himself. Then he knew that because Scumbucket was so evil and mean, that after he had become king, he would have Scumbucket killed so that he would be safe.

So Snotnose sent a messenger to Scumbucket and told him what he wanted. Scumbucket decided that this was a good idea. He could go to Perelandria, help Snotnose get rid of the king, and then as soon as Snotnose became king, then he could kill Snotnose and become King Scumbucket. You see, bad people just can't be trusted.

So Scumbucket went to Perelandria, and pretty soon things started going wrong all over the kingdom. Cows started giving mud instead of milk. Chickens started laying square eggs that were rotten! Children started catching the dreaded green measles and grown ups started getting purple spotted slippies that were worse than all of the measles and chicken pox at the same time. And other things that were even worse started happening. The king's good wizards were hard at work trying to set things right, but it was just too much for them. And the kings men were all over the land trying to fix the things that were going wrong, but there was just too much, and they just couldn't keep up.

One day, Good King Worgold and his advisors and councilors were at work talking about the problem and trying to figure out what to do. They knew that evil magic was being used, there was just too much going wrong. But they didn't know what to do about it. Finally, the king's oldest advisor said, "Sire, there is only one answer to this

problem.”

The king looked at his advisor and asked, “What is that, Sir Patches?”

Sir Patches said, “Sire, we must call in the Gold Dragon and ask him to save us.”

The king’s eyes lit up. “Sir Derek, the Gold Dragon, of course. Why didn’t we think of him before this?”

“Because, Sire, we always try to solve our problems ourselves and only call on the Gold Dragon when our troubles are too great for the rest of us to handle,” Sir Patches replied.

So the king sent a courier to the castle of the Gold Dragon. When the courier arrived, he was immediately escorted to Sir Derek. “Sir Derek,” the courier said, “Good King Worgold sends his greetings, and says to tell you that the kingdom is sorely beset. He asks that the Gold Dragon come once more and save the kingdom yet again.”

Well now, Sir Derek felt that he could not do anything less. After all, if the problems facing the kingdom were so bad that the king and his advisors felt that they had to ask the Gold Dragon for help, then the problems were very bad indeed. So he told the courier that he would leave as soon as he and his squire could pack the needed supplies.

It wasn’t long before Sir Derek and his squire, Reynold, were on their horses and headed for the king’s castle. Sir

Derek was wearing his gold armor, which meant that he was traveling as the Gold Dragon. His armor wasn't really made of gold, it just looked like it. Everyone in the kingdom recognized that gold armor, and they knew that the Gold Dragon was the strongest, bravest and best knight in the kingdom. What most people didn't know was that he was also a pretty good wizard as well.

They had not been riding too long when the Gold Dragon brought his horse to a stop. Ahead of them in the road were five tiger toads. Now no one in Perelandria had ever seen a tiger toad before because they only lived in a far off land, but the Gold Dragon knew what they were. Now tiger toads were not like ordinary toad frogs. For one thing, they were much bigger. They were just a little bit bigger than a house cat. And they had stripes, which is where they got their names. But what made them so bad was that they had a mouth full of fangs and they were poison. If one of them were to bite his horse just one time, it would kill the horse. They were really fast and could jump a lot better than any other toad. Now the Gold Dragon did not believe in hurting anything if he did not have to. And he knew that these tiger toads had not come here by themselves, which meant that someone had brought them here by magic. Well, if they had been brought to Perelandria by magic, then they could be sent away by magic. Fortunately, the Gold Dragon knew some transportation magic. At first he considered sending them back where they came from, then he had a better idea. He sent them to the person who had brought them here.

Now Sir Derek did not yet know who that person was, or

where he was. But can you imagine old Scumbucket's surprise when they showed up in his workroom in Snotnose's castle? Boy, I bet that put a scare into him.

Sir Derek and Reynold rode on and soon came to Good King Worgold's castle. They were immediately escorted in to see the king and his advisors.

"Sir Derek!" said Good King Worgold. "Thank you so much for coming so soon."

"I am glad to be of service, Your Majesty. What is the problem?"

So Good King Worgold started telling Sir Derek all about what had been happening. How cows were giving mud instead of milk, how chickens were laying rotten square eggs, how someone would plant tomato or corn seeds and skunk cabbage would grow instead, or they would plant bean seeds and get poison ivy. Now that last one really upset Sir Derek, because he really liked his beans. So he sat and just thought about the problem for two and a half minutes. Then he asked for some things. He wanted a large map of the kingdom of Perelandria and some different colored magic markers.

After the king had the map and magic markers brought in, Sir Derek spread the map out on the table and then asked that he be told of all of the problems and where they had happened. Now the king and his advisors had kept very good records. So they started listing them off to Sir Derek. And every time that they would tell him of one, he would

take a magic marker and make a small "X" on the map where it had happened. The very worst problems he marked with a red X. Then the ones that were not quite so bad, he marked with a green X. And so on until the ones that were just a little bit bad he marked with a brown X. After all of the problems had been listed, there were X's all over the map.

Sir Derek looked at the map for a minute, then he picked up the brown magic marker and connected all of the brown X's. They made a big circle on the map.

"What sort of magic is this, Sir Derek?" asked Sir Patches.

"It is the magic of mathematics," Sir Derek replied. Then he used the yellow magic marker and connected all of the yellow X's. And had another smaller circle inside of the first one. He did this with each of the colors that he had used. When he was finished, he had a lot of circles on the map, each one inside of another, larger one. And the red circle was the smallest one of all.

Sir Derek looked at the map for a minute, then pointed right to the very center of the circles and said, "Right there. That is the source of all of these problems."

Good King Worgold looked at where Sir Derek was pointing and said, "Why, that is Baron Snotnose's castle. But I did not think that he knew anything about magic."

Sir Patches spoke up, "Sire, Baron Snotnose may know a little magic, just as any peasant would know, but nothing

stronger than a spell to get rid of a headache. He must have hired an evil sorcerer.”

“I agree with Sir Patches,” said the Gold Dragon. “And I know of only one evil sorcerer in the world that would be able to cast this much black magic. The sorcerer Scumbucket is that man, but he lives in a far off land.”

“Well then,” said Good King Worgold, “Baron Snotnose must have hired this Scumbucket. I will have to gather some of my army and send them to the baron’s castle to arrest them.”

“Nay, your majesty. Gather your entire army and send them after the miscreants, and as soon as they got close enough to be seen, Scumbucket would wipe them all out with just a few spells. Nay, I shall have to go and bring them in for your majesty’s justice.”

Good King Worgold beamed a very large smile. “I thank you Sir Derek. But may I send an honor guard with you?”

Sir Derek smiled, “Perhaps a half dozen soldiers to guard them on the way back here after I have brought them out would be useful.”

“Then you shall have six of my own personal guard to accompany you. When will you leave?”

“Well, ‘tis a bit late to leave this afternoon. It will soon be getting dark. I think that we should leave the first thing in the morning, at first light.”

“Excellent!” said the king. And all around the table, the king’s advisors were smiling. They knew that the problem would soon be solved with the Gold Dragon on the job.

That evening at dinner, the servants placed a plate in front of Sir Derek. He smiled as he looked at the large portion of beans on his plate. Sir Derek really liked his beans. But just as he went to get a fork full of beans, they turned into stink bugs. Now that really irritated Sir Derek, he liked his beans, but nobody likes a stink bug, and much less a plate full of them. He quickly banished them and ate the rest of his food. But now, he had a personal gripe against Scumbucket.

Early the next morning, the Gold Dragon set out, accompanied by his squire Reynold and six of the king’s very best soldiers. They had not been riding too long when they came upon a peasant that seemed to be in trouble. The man had a horse drawn wagon, and the wagon and horse were mired down in a field of mud. The man had gotten out of his wagon to see what he could do to get his horse and wagon out of the mud, but the mud came up to his waist.

“Hello good man,” said the Gold Dragon. “You seem to be in a bit of a problem there.”

The man looked at the Gold Dragon. “Aye, Sir. My horse was pulling my wagon along, nice and peaceful like, and all of a sudden, the road just turned to mud right under us.”

“Well, I see some rope in your wagon. Tie one end to your wagon and throw us the other end and we will soon have you out of that mess.”

The man did as he had been told, and the soldiers all grabbed the rope and had their horses start pulling. And as Sir Derek had said, the man’s wagon and horse were soon out of the mud.

“I thank you Sir,” said the man. He dug into a pouch at his waist and pulled out two pennies. “I am not a rich man, Sir. I only have two pennies, but I gladly give them to you for this great service.”

“Keep your pennies, my good man. Think of it as a gift from the king.” Then Sir Derek handed the man a gold coin, which was more money than the man would normally see in a year. “Here, add this to your pennies and know that your king is concerned about your welfare.” Of course, the man was very grateful.

Then the Gold Dragon pulled out his sword, which was somewhat magical also. He chanted an incantation and pointed the sword at the field of mud. A beam of light speared out from the tip of the sword and hit the mud. Where the beam hit, the mud immediately dried and a circle of dry earth spread out from that spot. Within a minute, all of the mud was dry and the road was back to normal again.

Sir Derek set out again with Reynold at his side and the king’s soldiers following along behind. The soldiers were

marveling at how generous that the Gold Dragon had been and that he had not even taken credit for his generosity, but had given the credit to the king. What they did not know was that Sir Derek was almost as rich as the king.

They had not been riding much longer when they were faced with another problem. Suddenly, they were attacked by a whole bunch of swords. There was not anyone holding the swords, they just came flying through the air all by themselves and attacked the party. Now the king's soldiers were all very good swordsmen, after all, they were the king's best. So they were able to hold their own. But every time that they would beat back a sword, it would just come right back at them. And there were two of them for every soldier. So there was no way that they could win, sooner or later they would become so tired that they would not be able to defend themselves, and then the swords would win.

Even Reynold had one sword attacking him. But the Gold Dragon had four swords attacking him. It was obvious that the Gold Dragon was the main target, the other swords were only to keep the soldiers and Reynold too busy to come to the Gold Dragon's aid. Now we know that the Gold Dragon's sword was also magical. When he drew that sword, it was blazing with golden light, so Sir Derek knew that the magic animating those swords was really bad, evil magic. When the first sword attacked the Gold Dragon, he slashed back at it and his golden sword cut the other sword in half. That did not surprise the Gold Dragon. But what did surprise him, the sword that he had cut in half fell back, and then both halves of it came back at

him again.

Well now, the Gold Dragon was soon very busy, and getting busier all of the time with all of those swords and pieces of swords attacking him. So in his haste, he accidentally cut one of the helms, or handles of one of the swords in half. When he did that, they all heard a loud scream, and that sword and all of its pieces fell to the ground, inanimate. Of course, the Gold Dragon realized instantly that the animating magic had to be in the helms of the swords, so he started targeting them as much as he could. Soon, all of the swords that were attacking him, and all of their pieces were laying on the ground. He immediately went to Reynold's aid, and quickly finished off that sword. Then he took care of the swords that were attacking the soldiers.

After they rested a bit, they were on their way once more. Soon, they came upon a peasant that seemed to have a problem. He had a large rock on his back. Now you must understand. The man did not have the rock tied on, or have it in a backpack like he was trying to carry it somewhere, it was just stuck to his back.

Naturally, the Gold Dragon had to stop. "Hello, good man," he said. "Why is there a large rock on your back?"

The man turned a mournful look at the Gold Dragon. "I don't know, Sir. It was there on me back when I woke up this morning, and I can't get it off. Me wife, she tried so hard to pull it off, but I had to ask her to stop because it hurt so much."

“Well, lets see if I can do something about that,” the Gold Dragon said as he pulled out his sword. A look of fear filled the man’s eyes and the Gold Dragon laughed, “Don’t worry, I am not going to try to cut it off.”

He reached out with his sword and touched the rock, intending to mutter an incantation. But as soon as the sword touched the rock, it fell away, its magic canceled by the magic of the sword. The man was very happy to be rid of it and pushed it off of the road.

The Gold Dragon and his companions continued on. Soon they heard a howling, much like a pack of hounds hunting, only it was a much more blood chilling sound. Then they saw them. A pack of about ten animals. They were about the size of large dogs, and were built much like dogs. But instead of fur, they were covered in scales. And their eyes glowed like red fires. Hell hounds. And they were headed straight for the Gold Dragon and his companions.

Now the Gold Dragon did not want his horse to get hurt, so he dismounted and drew his sword as he stepped in front of the horse. The sword was blazing with a fiery light, which meant that the approaching creatures were both very evil and very magical. The soldiers saw what the Gold Dragon did and copied his action. Of course, their swords did not blaze, they did not have magical swords.

The demon hounds attacked, one to each soldier and one to Reynold. But three attacked the Gold Dragon. The soldiers discovered something very dismaying when they went to fight the beasts. A minor cut, they did not pay any

attention to, and they did not bleed. A major cut would cause the beast to back away for a few seconds while the wound closed and then it would attack again. One soldier managed to cut one of them in half, the two halves pulled themselves back together, the beast got up, shook itself and attacked again. Now if an animal is attacking you, and you can't wound it bad enough to make it stop, and you can't kill it, then you cannot win. The soldiers knew that they were in trouble.

The Gold Dragon had a different experience than the soldiers. Having a magic sword helps. When the first beast attacked him, he slashed it, and it burst into flames and quickly burned into ashes which blew away in the slight breeze that was blowing. The other two beasts saw what had happened and changed their tactics. They stayed just out of the range of his sword and separated, one going to one side of the Gold Dragon, the other one going to the other side.

Now the Gold Dragon knew that they planned to attack him at the same time, from opposite directions, so he watched them very carefully. Suddenly, they leapt at him. When they did, he took two quick steps forward and spun around to face them. The two beasts collided in mid air, biting and slashing with their claws before they realized their mistake. The Gold Dragon quickly sliced each of them deeply with his sword and they too burst into flames. Then he turned his attention to the beasts that were attacking the others and quickly finished them off.

After they rested for a few minutes, they remounted and

were on their way once more. Now they should have reached Baron Snotnose's castle by late afternoon, but because of all of the problems and delays, by early evening, they were only about 3/4 of the way there. I have only told you about a few of the problems that they had.

They stopped and set up a camp for the night. The Gold Dragon set up magical protection around the camp so that nothing evil could disturb them as they slept. He was not sure that the sorcerer that had been sending all of the evil their way was really Scumbucket, but he did not know of another sorcerer that was powerful enough and evil enough to be doing it. Anyway, he made the protection very strong so that although Scumbucket might be able to break through it, it would give the Gold Dragon enough warning that he could fight it off.

Now the soldiers all trusted and respected the Gold Dragon, but they decided to post guards all night anyway, just to make doubly sure that they were safe. They needn't have bothered with that, but it did not hurt and made them feel better.

After a quick breakfast the next morning, they were on their way once more. Of course, that evil Scumbucket could not allow them to travel in peace, and he sent more things to trouble them, like the flock of giant bats with mouths full of fangs. Fortunately, they were easy to kill, even for the soldiers.

Even with the delays, they reached Baron Snotnose's castle by late morning. When they went to ride through the gate,

the guards there did not even try to stop them, they did not want to challenge the Gold Dragon and six of the king's elite guards. They knew that they were no match, so they just got out of the way.

They rode right up to the front door of the castle and dismounted. Grooms ran up to take the horses. "Just hold the horses here, we won't be staying," the Gold Dragon told the grooms.

They did not bother to knock, they just barged right in. When they entered the great hall, a servant spotted them and scurried off. A minute later Baron Snotnose entered the great hall.

"Sir Derek! What is the meaning of this? How dare you come barging into my castle, uninvited?"

The Gold Dragon answered. "As you can see from my armor, I am here in my capacity as the Gold Dragon.. That means that I am on the king's business. I am here to arrest you and your sorcerer for treason against the crown."

Now old Snotnose looked at the Gold Dragon for about 2 and a half seconds and then turned and started to run from the room. He did not count on Reynold, the fleet of foot. The good squire caught him before he got half way to the door. Then the Gold Dragon told the soldiers to tie the baron's hands behind his back with chains and to disarm him.

Several servants had entered the great hall, so the Gold

Dragon told them that any who attempted to aid the baron would also be arrested and charged with treason to the crown.

Then the Gold Dragon pulled out his sword and held it out in front of him. He muttered a quick spell and then slowly started turning. Suddenly, he felt the sword tugging forward. He followed the tugging to a staircase at the side of the room. Then, still following the tugging, he went up two flights of stairs, down a corridor, and started up a circular staircase. That told him that he was going up in a tower.

At the top of the staircase there was a door that was closed. His sword was blazing brighter than he had ever seen it before. He opened the door and stepped in. Now that evil Scumbucket had been waiting for him, he had started an evil spell and as the Gold Dragon stepped through the door, Scumbucket finished the spell. Suddenly there were about 15 poisonous snakes on the floor right in front of the Gold Dragon. Well now, the Gold Dragon figured that if Scumbucket liked playing with poison snakes so much, he would help him. So he used his sword to flip the poison snakes over to Scumbucket. Suddenly Scumbucket decided that the snakes were not a good idea and banished them.

“Scumbucket,” said the Gold Dragon, “In the name of His Majesty, Good King Worgold, you are under arrest.”

“I don’t think so,” said Scumbucket as he drew his own sword. Now Scumbucket had a magical sword too, but his was evil. It glowed black if you can imagine that. It

seemed to suck the light right out of the air, so it was surrounded by darkness. Scumbucket pointed his sword at the Gold Dragon and muttered a spell. A black beam lanced out toward the Gold Dragon, but he simply held up his own sword. The black beam hit the blazing sword and bounced back to hit Scumbucket. It almost knocked him cockeyed.

Scumbucket shook himself and decided that was not a good idea. So he started waving his sword and his free hand around in the air and chanting some arcane words. Suddenly, balls of black energy started appearing in the air and headed straight for the Gold Dragon. As the first of them reached the Gold Dragon, he used his sword and swatted it over to Scumbucket. Now Scumbucket had not really been watching the Gold Dragon, he was too intent on what he was doing, so it surprised him so much when that first black ball hit him and knocked him back three steps, that he did not react quickly enough to keep the second one from hitting him also.

Now Scumbucket had been hurt pretty bad by his own energies that he was generating, but he was not ready to give up yet. He shouted out another evil spell and a whole bunch of scorpions were suddenly climbing up the Gold Dragon's legs. The Gold Dragon muttered a spell of his own and all of the scorpions were suddenly climbing Scumbucket's legs instead of the Gold Dragon's. Scumbucket quickly banished them, but he missed one that was climbing up the back of his left leg. And that one scorpion soon reached what it considered a prime spot and stung Scumbucket right on his tookus. Scumbucket let out

a yell of pain.

The Gold Dragon asked, "Scumbucket, are you through now?"

Scumbucket's voice was now kinda shaky as he replied, "I don't think so."

The Gold Dragon said, "Well, I tire of your games." With that, he pointed his sword at the evil sorcerer and chanted a short verse. A beam of white light speared out from the sword and hit old Scumbucket right in the middle of his chest. Now white light is a very good energy, and if it were to hit you or me, it would feel good. But Scumbucket was evil, and because of that, the white light that hit him hurt him more than what his black energies had. It set him down on the floor, stunned.

The Gold Dragon quickly stepped over to the evil sorcerer and pulled a pair of special gloves from his belt pouch. These he put on the sorcerer's hands. These gloves would prevent Scumbucket from wiggling his fingers, then he locked the gloves together behind Scumbucket's back. That would prevent Scumbucket from waving his hands about while trying to cast another spell. Finally, he put a gag in Scumbucket's mouth so that he could not speak anymore spells.

Now that he had Scumbucket pretty much helpless, he turned his attention to the sorcerer's sword which lay on the floor where he had dropped it when the white light hit him. The Gold Dragon extended his own sword and

touched the evil sword with it. Immediately, the black sword was engulfed in flames and was soon nothing more than a puddle of melted steel on the floor. Then he set about to destroy everything else in the sorcerer's workshop that was at all evil.

By now, Scumbucket was starting to regain his senses, so the Gold Dragon caught the back of his robe and lifted him to his feet and pushed him toward the door. When they reached the great hall, the Gold Dragon instructed one of the servants to get a wagon ready. When the servant returned and told them that the wagon was ready, they went back outside. The wagon was just like the one that had been mired down in the mud the previous day.

The gold Dragon had Snotnose and Scumbucket put in the back of the wagon. He did not want them to think that they could escape by allowing them to ride horses. Then he instructed one of the servants to drive the wagon. They all mounted their horses and were on their way.

In time, they reached the king's castle and the prisoners were escorted in to face the king's justice. The king looked at the two men for a moment and then said, "Snotnose, why did you do this?"

Snotnose said, "Because I deserve to be king more than you do, you have not used your power at all. You could have conquered all of the surrounding countries and made them a part of Perelandria. But no, you had to be a nice guy."

The king said, "And you prefer evil. Well, I can't have evil

nobles in my kingdom, so I am stripping you of your title, you are no longer a baron, just another surf. And surfs cannot own castles, so your estates are no longer yours. Nor do surfs dress in the finery that you are wearing." Then the king had his servants take the ex baron away and dress him in a surf's clothing.

Then the king asked, "Now what do we do about this evil sorcerer?"

The king's chaplain spoke up, "Your majesty, if I may make a suggestion. I know of a monastery, a very large monastery with over a hundred monks. They are all dedicated to teaching people why it is much nicer to be good instead of being bad. And the abbot is a friend of mine. I am sure that they would look upon Scumbucket as a challenge, they could have the monks working in shifts, all day, every day explaining to him why it is better to be nice."

"Now that sounds like a good idea," said the king. "Perhaps we should sentence him to a year at that monastery for every year that he has been a sorcerer. But how long would that be?"

Sir Derek answered, "Sire, evil sorcerers use black magic to extend their lives and maintain their youth. The earliest stories that I have heard of Scumbucket date back a hundred years. So he has been a sorcerer at least that long."

"Then it is decided," said the king. "A hundred years of

instruction at the monastery.”

The chaplain spoke up once more, “Your majesty, there is only one problem. As soon as they remove his gag, and free his hands, he will use his evil magic to escape.” Which is exactly what Scumbucket was planning already.

“But,” continued the chaplain, “if we were to ask the Gold Dragon to place a spell on his cell, so that no magic could be used in that cell, then it would be secure.”

“I would be happy to do that, Sire,” said Sir Derek. At that pronouncement, old Scumbucket wilted, and even though he was gagged, he managed to let out a wail of despair through his nose.

The king looked at Sir Derek and asked, “How can I reward you for this great service that you have done for me and the kingdom?”

Sir Derek replied, “Sire, I really don’t need anything, but my squire, Reynold, actually captured Snotnose when he tried to escape, so if you could reward him, I would look upon that as a reward to me.”

King Worgold said, “Well, since Snotnose is no longer a baron, that area does not have a noble in it to run it. I can make Reynold a baron and give him Snotnose’s castle and estates.”

“That would be wonderful,” said Sir Derek.

So that is what they did. In twenty years, they managed to convince Scumbucket and he started coming up with some better reasons than the monks had used on him. And when he gave up his evil ways, the spell that they had used on him was canceled out and he started to age normally. Then he asked if he could become a monk too.