

OSOLA THE DRAGON

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This is the story of a little dragon who grew up to save the people he loved.

Once upon a time, in a land far away, lived a family of dragons. They lived on a tall mountain, and as was the tradition of dragons, they made life miserable for the people who lived in the valley below.

When the dragons felt bored, they would fly down to the valley and blow fire into the village. They enjoyed watching the people run in fear. This is what the dragons did for fun.

The people of the village became angry at the dragons and decided they needed to do something to stop them from attacking all the time.

The leaders of the village made a plan to climb the mountain and kill the dragons while they slept. It would take several days to reach the top of the mountain and the journey would be very dangerous. Five men volunteered to go up the mountain to kill the dragons.

There was much discussion on how to kill the dragons. No one had ever killed a dragon before, so they did not know what weapons they needed to kill them.

While the meeting was going on, a stranger entered the village and asked to speak to the leaders. One of the younger men took him to where the meeting was being held.

After the stranger entered the building, he asked if he could speak. The chiefs agreed.

“My village heard that you’ve decided to try to kill the dragons. I’ve brought you a plan on how you can kill them,” he spoke. “I know how you can take care of your problem once and for all.”

The elders of the village became silent and listened intently to the stranger.

One of the chiefs asked him, “What will it cost us for you to give us your plan?”

“It will cost you nothing. The people of my village want the dragons dead the same as you. We will help you kill these dragons and then they won’t bother you or my people anymore,” he answered.

“How do we do this?” another of the chiefs asked.

“As you know, it is a fact that salt hurts dragons,” he started. “If we spray them with salt water, they will fall to the ground, and then we can kill them,” the stranger informed the group.

“Yes, we know about the salt, but how do we spray them with the salt water?” a younger man asked.

“Since your village is in a valley, we’ll build towers on either side of the valley and store salt water in them. When the dragons come to burn your village, and when they are between the towers, we’ll open the water pipes and spray the dragons with the salt water. We know they always come from the same direction, so they will fall into our trap. When they fall to the ground, we can kill them,” the stranger replied.

The elders of the village talked over the plan. It would take several days to get to the ocean to bring the salt water to the village. It was going to take a long time to get enough water to kill the dragons, but since they liked the idea, they agreed to build the towers.

The villagers from the town where the stranger lived came to help.

The workers were divided into three groups. Two of the groups would build each of the two towers while the third group went to the ocean to bring the water.

The people of the villages kept very busy building the towers. They cut the wood and carried the lumber up to where carpenters began to build first the base of the tower,

and then they built the large barrels where the salt water would be stored.

On the sides of each of the towers, facing the valley, large pipes were installed that would spray the water across the valley toward the other tower. When the dragons would fly between the towers, the plan was they would be sprayed with the salt water, and then they would fall to the ground where they would be able to kill them.

It took several months to finish the project. The barrels on top of the towers were now full of water from the ocean.

After everything was completed, the leaders assigned lookouts to stay on the towers to watch for the dragons and when the dragons flew into their trap, they would release the water. People were on the towers all day, every day.

It had been a long time since the dragons had come, which was not normal. The workers began to wonder what had happened to them. Perhaps they had died.

Then the day came. The screech of the dragons echoed through the valley as they approached the village to burn it to the ground once again. The villagers ran into the hills as they always did, leaving the village empty.

Suddenly the dragons flew soaring through the air toward the empty village. Fire was coming from their mouths as they swooped down from the sky between the two towers. When the dragons were in the correct position, the workers opened the valves and the water gushed out, covering the two dragons in salt water.

Almost immediately, the two dragons began to fall from the sky with fire belching from their mouths. The dragons screamed in pain as they fell.

As soon as they hit the ground, the villagers ran out of the trees and attacked the fallen dragons. The dragon's skin began to turn gray from the salt water and they were not able to fight back. It only took a few minutes for the villagers to kill the dragons using long pointed sticks.

A loud cheer went up from the people as they continued to take the long sticks and thrust them into the now lifeless bodies.

The danger of the dragons was now over!

Life in the village was happy. The fear of the dragons was now at an end. They had a big celebration that lasted for a week.

After the festival was over, one of the young men in the village named Bolaan decided to climb the mountain. No one had ever climbed the mountain before because it was where the dragons lived, but now that the dragons were dead, he was no longer afraid.

Bolaan always liked the forest. He was a good hunter and could catch fish with just his hands. He was an explorer and had traveled deep into the forest. No one knew the forest better than he did.

Bolaan packed his things for the hike up the mountain. For him it was going to be a great adventure. It took three days to reach the top of the mountain.

As he looked down from the top, he was amazed at the view. He could see hundreds of kilometers in every direction. He could see the ocean, the river valley, the crater in the volcano, the great forest, and the open farmland.

He placed a long stick into the ground at the top of the mountain and tied a red cloth to it.

He said to himself, “I claim this mountain for my people and I name it ‘Mon Flonta’.”

That means ‘mountain with a beautiful view’ in his language.

The sun was setting, so Bolaan looked for a place to sleep. He planned to go down the mountain in the morning.

A short distance from the peak he found a small cave, or at least that is how it looked when he first saw it. When he went in, he realized that the cave was deep and wide. The floor of the cave had bones scattered everywhere, and it smelled terrible. It was obvious that something had been living there. He concluded it was most likely the home of the dead dragons.

Bolaan decided to stay in the cave, since it was getting cold outside and a fog was beginning to roll in.

He started a fire to prepare his dinner. The yellow light of his fire danced on the walls. His shadow moved from place to place as he walked around the cave exploring.

Suddenly, he heard a noise deep in the cave. It sounded like someone was crying. What could it be?

Bolaan went to see what it might be, and just when he got out of the light of his fire, suddenly a blast of heat came at him. Bolaan jumped out of the way just in time not to be cooked.

He looked carefully into the deepest part of the cave. Then to his surprise, a large beast with four horns crawled out of the darkness. It was a dragon.

Bolaan fell backward and then squirmed on his back toward the entrance of the cave trying to escape, but the dragon was not going to let him go.

He was not fast enough. The dragon caught up with him and held him down. They were eye to eye, looking at each other.

Bolaan was scared to death.

The dragon looked down at him smelling his face. He was just curious.

After a while, the dragon licked Bolaan in the face and rubbed its head against Bolaan's cheek.

It was just a baby dragon. Bolaan concluded it must have been the child of the dragons the villagers had killed in the valley.

Eventually Bolaan crawled out from under the dragon and leaned against the wall. The entrance to the cave was blocked by the baby dragon, so escape was impossible.

The baby dragon looked hungry and scared, so Bolaan tossed him some food from his pouch. It ate it up quickly and looked for more.

While they were looking at each other, Bolaan decided that the dragon needed a name. He thought and he thought until he came up with the perfect name. He would call him Osola, which in Bolaan's language means 'lost child'.

During the night, the dragon kept him warm, because when Osola snored he blew fire out of his mouth, which kept the cave nice and comfortable.

When Bolaan woke up, the dragon was leaning against him as if he were his mother. Bolaan tried to sneak away from the baby dragon toward the exit of the cave to go home, but when Osola noticed he was leaving, he started to cry. Bolaan turned to look back at him.

He took some more food out of his pack and threw it at Osola, who snapped it out of the air and swallowed it quickly.

Bolaan emptied his food from his pack and gave it to him. Osola ate it all very quickly and then looked for even more.

Feeling sorry for the young dragon, Bolaan decided to stay for a few days to help him get stronger. He was not sure what he was going to do with the little dragon once the creature was doing better.

After a week of caring for Osola, Bolaan prepared to return to his village. He had been gone longer than he had planned, and his family was probably worried about him.

When Bolaan left the cave, Osola followed him. He tried to get the little dragon to go back inside the cave, but he would not listen. As Bolaan walked, so did Osola. It soon became obvious that the dragon was attached to his new friend and he was not going to let him leave alone.

Now Bolaan had a big problem. If the dragon followed him home, the people of his village would want to kill him.

If Bolaan left him on the mountain alone, he would surely die, only Osola was not going to let that happen. Everywhere Bolaan went, the dragon followed him, which made hunting for food very difficult.

Bolaan thought for a while and then came up with a plan. He would tie Osola to a tree with a rope. Then he could leave, and the dragon would not be able to follow. In a few days, he would return to make sure Osola was okay.

Taking a rope, he had made from pine limbs, he tied the dragon to the largest tree he could find.

Thinking that his plan was going to work, Bolaan started down the mountain to his

home.

Suddenly there was a burst of flames, and then Osola came running after him. It had not taken long for the dragon to burn the rope and get free.

Now Bolaan needed a new plan, so he sat down on a large rock to think. Osola came to him and laid his head on the rock next to him.

He looked up at Bolaan with sad eyes.

Bolaan sat wondering what he was going to do. He had to get home.

He got up and started down the mountain, with Osola following behind. Bolaan tried to go faster so the dragon would get lost, but every time he thought he had gotten away from Osola, he would burn a path to catch up. The little dragon was proving to be pretty smart.

Having no choice but to bring the dragon with him. Bolaan headed home.

When he got to the valley, the remains of the two dead dragons were still in lying on the ground and the smell was bad.

Suddenly, Bolaan thought Osola might know that the dead bodies were his parents, and then he might do something for revenge. Bolaan began to run.

To his surprise, Osola just ran past his parents and followed his new friend. He ignored his parents lying on the side of the path.

As they got closer to Bolaan's town, some children noticed Bolaan and the dragon were coming. They ran away to tell their parents.

Soon many people came to see what the children were talking about. They brought the long sticks they had used to kill Osola's parents.

"Wait!" Bolaan yelled out. "Let me tell you about what has happened before you kill this dragon!"

Then he told the story about how he had found the little dragon and of how they had become such good friends.

One of the men in the crowd suggested that the baby dragon might have been the reason why it had been so long between the raids on the village by the parents of Osola.

While they were talking, Osola looked at the people around him with sad eyes. He even had a tear fall from his cheek. His face was so sad, the people began to feel sorry for him.

The parents suddenly noticed that their children had gone up to Osola and begun to touch his nose and his wings. Soon they were crawling all over him and some of them were even sitting on his head. Osola was not bothered. In fact, he seemed to enjoy it.

The parents were very surprised at this and how gentle the baby dragon really was.

The longer Bolaan spoke, the calmer the people became. They watched as the children played and realized that the young dragon was very friendly.

One of the leaders asked, “What do you plan to do with this dragon when he’s full grown? We don’t have space in our village, and it’s possible that he might accidentally burn it down.”

Bolaan answered, “I’m not sure what I’m going to do. For now, he is following me wherever I go. I can’t get rid of him. He even ignored the bodies of his parents when we passed them. He’s become my shadow.”

The crowd stayed for a long time staring at the dragon while the children continued to play on him. He was a giant playground for them.

As evening began to fall, Bolaan’s mother brought food for him and the dragon.

Osola ate the food he was given and still wanted more. Then he tried to eat Bolaan’s food. It became a game they played all the time.

When darkness fell, Osola made a fire for them to keep warm. For now, they would have to stay away from the village. They stayed in the forest.

After about a week, the people of the village began to grow fond of the little dragon. They came out to feed him and to play with him. He was very friendly and seemed to enjoy all the attention.

Soon he was accepted as a member of the clan, but there was a problem. He began to grow and grow. Even though he grew as large as his parents had been, he remained gentle and friendly. He only used his fire-breath when it helped.

Sometimes he had small accidents, especially when he was asleep. One time he burned all Bolaan's clothes on the drying line.

After he learned to fly, the children loved to climb on his back and ride him as he flew over the village. The children would yell down to their parents to look up and see them. At first, the parents were afraid for their children, but soon they learned to trust him. Osola was good to the people of the town, and they learned to love him.

Word spread throughout the region that the village had a pet dragon. People came from far-off places to see the dragon. They were always surprised when they found out the stories of the dragon were true.

As time went by, the village became prosperous because people were coming to see Osola the dragon. The people sold statues of the dragon for souvenirs, and the women made clothing with Osola's face on them. The town grew and grew. Soon the two villages that had destroyed the dragons became one. The two villages were becoming a city.

The king from the next province was jealous of what was happening there, so he decided to capture Osola and have him brought to his castle. Then he would sell tickets to people who wanted to see the famous dragon.

The king's army began the trip to where Osola lived. No one in the city knew of the plan or that the army was on its way.

When the army was about a half-day's journey away, a man came running into the center of the town yelling, "The army is coming! The army is coming!"

Everyone in the city began to panic. No one knew what to do. The city had no way to protect itself. People began to run around in confusion making a lot of noise.

Bolaan heard about the army coming and ran out to where Osola was taking a nap. Bolaan jumped onto Osola, waking him up. Bolaan pointed to where the army was approaching. Osola flapped his wings, lifted off the ground, and headed down the valley toward the soldiers who were marching to the city.

In the distance, Bolaan saw the army. He pointed toward them and then Osola sped

faster and faster. He made screeching noises, which got the attention of the soldiers. He began to breathe hard and then took a deep breath, followed by a ball of fire that went down onto the line of soldiers on the road below.

There were screams from the men as they tried to run from the fire. Arrows began to fly into the air at Osola. He flapped his wings harder, climbed above the arrows, and then turned and dove again, blowing flames of fire at the remaining soldiers.

Several arrows hit Osola, but it did not stop him. He made a large arc and then descended one more time. The soldiers who had survived the first two attacks began to run into the woods, running for their lives.

Osola had defeated the army and the city was now safe.

Bolaan and Osola returned to their home. When they landed, Bolaan jumped off to look at the injuries caused by the arrows. There was a lot of blood, and Osola did not look good. He was a hero, but that did not matter right now.

The medicine man from the city came and tried to help Osola recover from his injuries. It took more than a month for the wounds to heal. From then on Osola went to live on the mountain in order to be safe. Bolaan visited him often and they spent a lot of time together. No one knows if he is still on the mountain. No one has gone to find out because they did not want the king to know he was alive.

The story of Osola and of how he saved the city spread across the land. The story went around the region that Osola had died from the arrows. The king also heard the story and never sent soldiers to the city again.

The city honored Osola with a large statue of him in the middle of the city. The statue still stands in the center of the town to this day. The city was renamed Osola in his honor.

As far as anyone knows, Osola was the last dragon.

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. tradition _____ | a. split, make into parts |
| 2. valves _____ | b. wood, timber |
| 3. divide _____ | c. wiggled, struggled |
| 4. carpenter _____ | d. custom, ritual, cultural |
| 5. lumber _____ | e. shower, fountain |
| 6. spray _____ | f. wealthy, rich, successful |
| 7. squirmed _____ | g. used to turn on and off water |
| 8. lean (v) _____ | h. noise made while sleeping |
| 9. prosperous _____ | i. rest against, prop |
| 10. snore _____ | j. one who works with wood |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. The older dragons were friends to the people of the village. | T / F |
| 2. Dragons do not like salt. | T / F |
| 3. Two towers were built by the villagers. | T / F |
| 4. The dragons destroyed the village the last time they attacked. | T / F |
| 5. Bolaan climbed the mountain. | T / F |
| 6. Bolaan named the mountain Mon Flonta. | T / F |
| 7. Osola burned the forests. | T / F |
| 8. The children loved Osola. | T / F |
| 9. The king sent his soldiers to take Osola to his palace. | T / F |
| 10. Osola became the defender of the city for many years. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. What would hurt the dragons? ____

- a) water
- b) fire
- c) salt
- d) food

2. What did the two villages build? ____

- a) two rivers
- b) two huts
- c) two boats
- d) two towers

3. What did Osola accidentally burn? ____

- a) Bolaan's clothes
- b) Bolaan's food
- c) Bolaan's home
- d) Bolaan's family

4. Why did the king want to capture Osola? ____

- a) put him into his zoo
- b) kill him
- c) sell tickets to see him
- d) destroy the city

COMPREHENSION: (*Write a complete sentence to answer the question.*)

1. Why did the villagers want to kill the older dragons?

2. What did the villagers put into the two towers?

3. From where did the villagers get the salt water?

4. Why did Bolaan climb the mountain?

5. What did Bolaan name the mountain?

6. Who played on Osola like a playground?

7. What happened to Osola's parents?

8. Who wanted to capture Osola and take him away?

9. What happened to the soldiers who were planning to attack the city?

10. What did the citizens rename the city to?
