

Mary Brenchley  
12636 Hammock Pointe Circle  
Clermont, Florida 34711  
msbrenchley@hotmail.com

## **The King's Gifts**

There once was a king who had a very big problem. He had a dragon living in a cave high in the mountains above his kingdom.

The dragon spread fear among the hearts of the people in the village. He told them that if they didn't share their crops with him he would burn their fields with his fiery breath and the smoke from the fires would block out the sun. If they didn't share their riches-their fine jewelry and silvery trinkets he would destroy their homes with a single blow of his mighty body.

The people would cry unto the King, "Because of the dragon our children are afraid to go to bed at night." They begged the King to save them.

The King loved his people and their suffering grieved him very much so he sent his mighty knights to fight the dragon. The knights did a good job of pushing the dragon further back up the mountain, but a few months later the dragon would return- madder and fierier than ever.

The King began to make plans with his royal knights to kill the dragon when he was approached by his three beautiful daughters, named Mirabel, Carina and Grace. For you see, the young princess's had tender hearts and had taken pity on the dragon.

"Please Father there has to be another way," Princess Mirabel said. "Just try talking to him first, try to reason with him.

He will listen to you," Princess Carina continued. "You are the King."

We lost so many knights with the last battle with the dragon," Princess Grace reminded her father.

"You can't reason with a dragon," the King began to explain but then he looked into their pleading eyes. He loved them very much. He found great joy in their goodness.

"I guess it wouldn't hurt to talk to him one last time?" the King said.

And so he gathered his mighty knights, his daughters and the village folk and headed up the hill to, as his daughters put it, reason with the dragon.

They all gathered at the entrance to the dragons cave.

"What do you want," the dragon bellowed from deep within the cave.

"My people are suffering because of you and your acts of terror," the King shouted into the cave. "My people are becoming hungry because of the damage you have done to their crops and property. Come out here and talk to me."

Red hot flame of fire swiftly rushed from the cave followed by the dragon. The village folk screamed with fright and ran back down the hill.

"I have ordered your extermination," continued the King standing firm. "My daughters have begged me to reconsider and try to reason with you."

The dragon looked to the Kings daughters, he knew them well. He had watched them from afar and knew of their kindness.

“What is it that you want,” asked the dragon.

“We want you to leave peaceably,” The King said.

“Never,” roared the dragon. “Since we are talking about what we want. I want to be king of this land.”

“Never,” said the King and in anger called forth his knights. “If a fight is what you want, a fight you will get.”

“Please father,” Princess Mirabel pleaded, “There has to be another way.”

“What about a challenge, a tournament,” suggest Princess Carina, “a game something other than more killing.”

“A game?” asked the dragon. “I love games.”

True the dragon did love games. He had watched from his hiding place high in the hill as the three princesses had played their games. He wished he could play too. His favorite was Hide & Seek.

“I want to play hide and seek,” the dragon said eagerly. “Yes, Hide and Seek. I will hide the princess’s crowns and they must come and find them. They must each take a turn coming and living with me, cooking my food, cleaning my cave and in their spare time they are free to look for their crowns.”

“No,” shouted The King. “Not my daughters.”

“If they can find their crowns and make it safely back to you—all of them---safely back to you I will leave your people alone,” the Dragon continued as if he had not heard the King objection, “but if they can’t find their crowns and return back to you within a

reasonable amount of time I get to keep their crowns and I get to be king. You, Dear King will be banished from the kingdom and I will rule.”

“I will not agree to any such a thing,” said the King not trusting the Dragon to live up to his part of the deal.

“Please Father,” the three princesses pleaded.

“We can do this, Princess Grace said. “We will return safely to you and save our people. Let us prove to you that we are truly princesses of a King.”

The King thought about how loyal, brave and valiant his daughters were. At that moment he remembered that there had been an enchantment placed on a dragons promise many years ago. If a dragon ever broke a promise it was instant death for that dragon.

“I think that just maybe you can do this,” the King said lovingly to his daughters. “We could solve this without bloodshed.”

Turning to the dragon he said, “Will you pledge this day that you will leave the kingdom and never come back if my daughters succeed?”

“Yes,” vowed the dragon.

Now the dragon had closely watched this tender interaction between the King and his daughters. He saw in the eyes of the princess’s the love they had for their father and could see the love that the King had for them. This could be a problem.

“When they come to live with me they must forget all about you their King and Father,” the dragon said. “Each and every day they must forget a little more about you until they remember nothing of their life here.”

The King thought about this for a moment then said, “All right but I must be able to give them three objects in which to help them on their journey.”

“Why not,” the dragon answered in bewilderment. “What object could you possibly give to them that could help them against a highly intelligent and clever dragon such as I. Not to mention fabulously good looking?”

The details were finalized and all would begin the next day at sunset.

The next morning the King called for his three daughters.

“My daughters,” the King said, “I have every confidence in the world that you will be able to accomplish this task you have so valiantly taken upon yourselves. In preparation I present to each of you three items.”

The King reached for a small bell and rang it. One of the King's noblest of knights entered the room carrying a purple velvet pillow. On top of the pillow sat three colorful birds and three wands made out of thick glass with sparkling diamonds swimming in their centers.

The King presented each princess with a wand and said, “This is a magic wand. Whenever you need my help you must whisper your request to the wand, flick it towards the castle and your message will be sent to me. I will send my knight to help. He will be a guide to you. Look to him and do all he instructs you to do. He is wise and has great knowledge.”

“This enchanted bird I will place upon your shoulder.” the King said. “It will help you. The bird will whisper warnings of dangers, for there is sure to be a lot of danger living amongst the dragon. The bird will also remind you, as you forget, that you are a daughter of a King.”

“Mirabel, since you are the oldest you shall go first,” instructed the King, “followed by Carina and Grace.”

At sunset Princess Mirabel headed up the hill to the dragons cave. Day passed, months passed and no sign of the princess.

Early one morning a terrible roaring woke the King and the town's people. The King looked out his window and saw the Princess Mirabel holding tight to the Knight being lead down the hill. Not far behind her was the fire breathing dragon with fury in his red eyes.

“Hurry,” shouted the King, “let down the drawbridge and open the gate.”

In ran the princess, the knight, and the bird safely back to the King.

It was a joyous reunion!

“Father, the gifts you gave me helped me so very much,” said the Princess Maribel. “I tried very hard to remember who I was. That dragon is very vain. He wore my crown all day long, looking at himself in the mirror, and at night he slept with it under his pillow.”

“You have proven yourself to be a true princess,” the King said with joy.

Nothing made the dragon more demanding than defeat. He now made the towns people double their food and trinket donations. It would not be long and the people begin to be grow hungry.

That evening at sunset Princess Carina headed up the hill to the dragons cave. Once again days pass, months passed and no sign of the princess.

One afternoon great puffs of smoke filled the skies. A spine tingling roar shook the village. The King once again saw one of his precious daughters holding tight to the Knight being lead to the castle followed by the dragon and this time a fast moving fire.

“Hurry,” the King ordered, “let down the draw bridge, and open the gate.”

The princess, the knight, and the bird made it safely back to the King.

Once again it was a joyous reunion!

“Father, the gifts you gave helped me very much,” said the Princess Carina. “I tried very hard to remember who I was. My sister was right the dragon is very vain. He looks at himself in the mirror all day long. So he hid my crown behind the mirror. He thought he could protect it as he was never far from it.”

“You have proved yourself to be a true princess, said the King with joy.

The Kings joy was short lived as he soon discovered that the fire had destroyed the crops. Great puffs of smoke filled the sky and covered the sun for days at a time. The dragon shook the ground with his mighty body. It was feared that houses would begin to fall off their foundations and crumble. The people cried unto the King for relief from the dragon’s fury.

Princess Grace watched as the townspeople became more desperate and scared. She understood for the dragon scared her too. She had watched as her sisters each came back victorious, but with each success the dragon had become fiercer. These were dark, terrible days.

I’m the smallest of the sisters, she thought to herself. Our father has made a mistake having me go last. I fear I will fail.

She voiced her fears to her father, the King.

“My precious, precious daughter,” said the King. “Don’t you understand I have had a plan all along, I have reserved you for last for a reason? I have held you in reserve because I know it will be the hardest and I also know that you will not forget who you are. You are my most valiant and obedient daughter. I know that you will listen to the

bird and that you will let the knight guide and direct you in this great challenge which will save our people.”

At sunset the Princess Grace hugged her sister’s good-bye and turning to the King said, “Like my sisters before me, I will do my very best.”

“That is all that I ask,” said the King. “And that will be good enough.”

Trembling, the princess put the enchanted bird upon her shoulder, tucked the magic wand into her pocket and headed toward the path that lead up the mountain. At the foot of the path she found the knight waiting for her.

“Don’t forget me,” the knight said. “I will be ready to help you anytime, all you have to do is ask.”

“I won’t forget,” promised Princess Grace. She climbed the mountain and entered the dragon’s cave.

Princess Grace quickly discovered that living with a dragon can be very dangerous. His fiery breath alone could painfully scorch her skin. Then there was his large bone crushing body. The enchanted bird worked around the clock warning the princess of dangers. Don’t move, watch out, stand still; don’t go in there, and so on and so forth.

Each day the princess began to forget her sister and the King a little bit more. But the bird, who never rested, constantly whispered in her ear “Remember you are a princess, a daughter of a King with a great mission the King has sent you to do.”

Princess Grace spent her days cooking, cleaning, and singing for the dragon and in her spare time looked for her hidden crown. She discovered that it was true; the dragon was vain and did indeed constantly look at himself in the mirror. She even caught him

looking at himself in the pots and pans she polished until they gleamed. She searched the cave from one end to the other never discovering the dragons hiding place. It was just not in the cave. With each new day she became more tired and more discouraged.

One day when the dragon was out, she once again turned the cave upside down and inside out until she clasped on the floor in tears of frustration.

“Ask for help from your Father,” the enchanted bird whispered into her ear.

The princess remembered her magic wand and pulled it out of her pocket.

“Father, I need help,” she whispered into the wand. “I simply cannot find my crown.” She then flicked her wand toward the castle.

Of course we all know who appeared at the entrance to the cave. It was none other than the knight.

“The King is glad that you have remembered to call to him for help,” he said.

“Come I want to show you something.” He took her hand and led her outside.

They walked to the edge of the cliff, which so happened to be where the dragon sat to look over the kingdom.

“In order for you to discover the dragons hiding place you have to understand the dragon, what he values, how he thinks,” the knight explained. “Study, watch the dragon and you will be sure to discover his hiding place.” And with that, the knight disappeared.

The next day when the dragon left the cave, the princess was not far behind him. The enchanted bird flew ahead and flew back with warning, mostly to stay back- she was getting too close to the dragon.

Princess Grace watched on as the dragon demanded trinkets from the people in the marketplace. He especially loved items in which he could see his reflection. She

followed the dragon back up the mountain, and instead of going back to the cave, he stopped, looked around to make sure no-one was watching and then heading further up the mountain until he reached another cave. There he paused at the entrance, once again looked over his shoulder and went in.

“So he must be hiding his treasures in the cave,” Princess Grace whispered to the bird. She began to formulate a plan. The princess was deep in thought when the enchanted bird warned, “You must get back to the cave before the dragon does. He must not suspect you have been spying on him.”

The next day when the dragon and the princess awoke the enchanted bird whispered into the princess’s ear, as she did every day, “Don’t forget you are a daughter of a King who has a great mission for you to perform.”

That day the dragon left the cave and so did the princess. The dragon headed down the mountain to the village while the princess headed up the mountain to the cave full of treasure.

At the entrance to the cave the princess lit a candle and entered the cave. The candle instantly went out making the tunnel so dark the princess could not see her own hand in front of her face. She could feel a strong gust of wind rushing through the tunnel and out the cave entrance. It threw her off balance, pushing her back out of the cave. Without the light of the candle how would she find her way?

The princess pulled out her magic wand and whispered, “Father, it is so dark in the cave, my candle will not stay lit, the wind whips me about, I need help.” She then flicked her wand toward the castle.

Once again we know who appeared, it was none other than the knight.

“It is dark in that cave and the wind may whip you off balance but it can be done,” the knight explained. “I know this cave. I have been here before. Hold tight to my hand and I will show you the way.”

“I hate the dark, I mean I really hate the dark,” Princess Grace said, hesitant to enter the cave.

The enchanted bird flew to her shoulder and whispered in her ear, “Remember your father told you to trust in the knight. He will guide you safely. He knows all about this cave. It was a promise from your father.”

The princess remembered and the memory gave her great courage to move forward.

“Now the secret to getting through the cave is being able to holding tight to the side of the cave,” the knight said. “It must be the right hand side. For one thing it will help keep you steady on your feet.”

With the enchanted bird on her shoulder, one hand clinging to the wall and the other hand clinging to the knights hand the princess began her journey into the tunnel of the cave.

The deeper they went into the cave the louder the howl of the wind became and with the wind came a cold that sank deep into the bones of the princess. She almost let go of the walls of the cave when they became wet and slimy to the touch, but with determination and courage in her heart she moved forward trusting in the knight and the enchanted bird.

All of a sudden the wall disappeared. The princess could feel open space and it threw her off balance.

The knight took her hand and said, “This entrance leads to a different part of the cave. You must not go that way but remain on this path. Feel your way across and grab hold of the wall on the other side. There will be three of these. At the third opening we will turn in and will find ourselves at the center of the cave. The wind will stop and we will know that we are there.”

True to his word, as they turned into the third opening the wind stopped.

“Light, your candle,” the knight instructed.

When the princess lit her candle she found they were in a large circular room and what lay before her, piled up to the ceiling took her breath away. There were chests of dazzling jewelry, china, pottery, fine linens and silk, terra cotta sculptures, gleaming coins of all shapes and sizes.

There was one treasure Princess Grace searched for with all the fervor of her heart, but sadly couldn’t find. Her crown was not in plain sight.

“I know it’s here,” said Princess Grace to the knight and the enchanted bird. “It will just take some searching.”

“Quick, we must go,” said the bird. “I hear the dragon coming up the mountain.”

“I will come back whenever I can and search until I find my crown,” the Princess Grace said.

True to her word, Princess Grace did return to the cave with the bird but they had no luck in finding the crown.

Winter came to the land and the dragon left the cave less frequently. The princess began to forget about her search and settled into her life with the dragon. She listened less and less to the enchanted bird and put her magic wand in a drawer.

On the first warm day of spring the princess went out to till the land for a vegetable garden. The enchanted bird flew out; landed on her shoulder and whispered into her ear, “Remember you are the daughter of a King. He has a great mission for you. Do not...”

“Stop,” said Princess Grace. “I remember but it is just too hard. Stop and leave me alone.”

Go back to the house,” she ordered the enchanted bird. The bird obeyed.

The princess went back to tilling the ground. The dragon came out of the cave, stretching and headed down the mountain without even a word of “good bye” to the princess.

Princess Grace began to feel bad that she had talked to the enchanted bird that way. She watched as the dragon headed to the castle. She heard the screams of the townsfolk and began to remember her sisters, her father the King. The frightened people in her village were counting on her.

“Maybe, I can try one more time.”

She began to run up the mountain to the cave of treasures. At the entrance of the cave she suddenly remembered...she had left her magic wand, and enchanted bird back in the dragons cave.

“Never, mind,” she said to herself. “I think I can do it all on my own. The knight has shown me the way.”

She reached the room of treasures, lit a candle and looked around the room.

Where to start. “Think like the dragon, think q very vain dragon,” she thought to herself as she remembered the words of the Knight.

It was then that she noticed, in the farthest corner of the room, what looked like the back of an extremely large chair. She pulled the chair away from the wall and found behind it a pile of intricately hand craved hand mirrors. With heart pounding, the princess reached deep into the pile and pulled out her crown. “That crazy, vain dragon,” she said to herself as she envisioned the dragon sitting in his huge chair with a mirror in each hand admiring how he looked wearing the crown.

She laughed out loud.

“I find nothing funny in the predicament you are in,” said a voice whose breath scorched her skin.

It was then she remembered how she had counted on the enchanted bird to warn her of the coming and going of the dragon. She wished the bird were with her now, along with the magical wand and the Knight. She vowed there and then that she would never forget to put her magic wand in her pocket and the enchanted bird on her shoulder. That is if she ever got out of this predicament.

“You may have found your crown, but you will never make it safely back to your father,” said the dragon as he darted towards her. “Give me the crown.”

Now, imagine this if you will, here was the smallest of girls running circles around the room being chased by a very large dragon. The girl was so fast that the dragon, in his enormity, could not keep track of her. The dragon became very dizzy and has he begun to sway, and when he did, the princess made a mad dash for the exit. Hanging onto the side of the wall she felt her way through cave and back out onto the mountainside.

From the cave of treasures, the Dragon roared his terrible roar, and the flames coming out his mouth became dark clouds that began to cover the land in darkness.

The princess ran back to the dragons cave, grabbed her magic wand and said, “Father I need help,” flicked it towards the castle, then gave a quick, but heartfelt, apology to the enchanted bird, put it on her shoulder and headed down the mountain.

The smoke was thick and the princess could not find the path that lead to the castle and the safety of her father. Just as she was losing all hope who should appear but the Knight.

“Grab hold of my hand,” he said. “I know the way. I know these mountains so well I could find my way in darkest of dark.”

That is just what it was. The darkest of dark. The anger of the dragon was so great and the smoke so black and blinding.

“Run faster, said the enchanted bird. “The dragon is almost upon us. The gates to the castle are so close.” So they ran faster.

“Father, Father, open the gates,” the princess yelled raising her magic wand to the sky.

It was then that the Princess, The Knight and the enchanted bird entered the castle to the waiting and joyous arms of a waiting father.

“Father, I learned the hard way, and almost too late, how important the gifts you gave to me where in helping me get back to you.”

It was in the instant of saying those words that the princess caught a brief glimpse of how much her father must love her and how much he wanted to help her to succeed. “Thank you for the gifts,” she said.

“I knew you would remember who you are even when things got hard,” said The King. “You have proven yourself worthy of a true Princess.”

“Excuse me your majesty,” said The Knight. “I hate to interrupt but there is a dragon in need of a send off.”

“Indeed you are right,” said the King.

The King, his daughters and the Knight went to gates of the castle to bid farewell to the Dragon who, in his state of dizziness, had tumbled down the mountain and lay sprolled in the mote. He lifted up his head out of the dirty water to face the King.

“Dragon, you have lost. Do you hear me, you have lost. I hear- by banish you from my kingdom. I banish you from my kingdom for let say a thousand years. Yes that should do it.” And with that the King Royal Knights dragged that Dragon out of the kingdom.

In the days to follow there were great celebrations in the land. Peace once again settled over the kingdom and there never were a happier people.

**Activity Day Girls:** The story is about them. Each of them is daughters of a King. They have a Heavenly Father who loves them and has given them gifts to help guide them back to him.

**Dragons:** We face each and every day---things that want to draw us away from our Heavenly Father. Things that will make us forget who we are and where we want to return. Hard things.

### **3 Gifts**

**Wand: Prayer**

**Knight: Jesus Christ**

**Bird: Holy Ghost**

Reminds us who we are  
Warns us of danger, whispers truths to us  
Testifies of Jesus Christ

The princess sent the Holy Ghost away-----can we send the Holy Ghost away?

**3 Daughters:** generations of time.