

Omega and the Curse of the Griffins



Written and illustrated by
Harry Bower

Prologue

A long time ago, griffins and dragons lived peacefully together.

The phoenixes wanted to rule and so decided to divide the friends.

They told the griffins that the dragons had cursed The Lost Island and they could no longer live there, and they told the dragons that the griffins had developed new powers which would kill a dragon on sight.

No-one remembered why anymore, but these two lies had perpetuated for generations and both griffins and dragons were terribly fearful of each other.

The phoenixes, who could easily fly to both islands knew of the lies but said nothing.

Now, the dragon clans were uniting and the phoenixes wanted to divide the dragons. They knew if Omega was killed, the ice and fire dragons would fight amongst themselves and a war would rage on The Lost Island.

They thought the best way to achieve this was to use the griffins to take the egg. No one would ever suspect a griffin and then they would be able to manipulate the dragons into blaming each other.

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Chapter 1



'My Dear Omega,' sighed Monarch, the mama dragon, as she looked contentedly at the ever-growing crack in the large red egg resting safely in the warm nest. 'I'm so pleased my baby is about to be born'.

Monarch had waited 11 months for this moment and she could barely contain her joy. For this moment was not just about her becoming a mother... something she had dreamed about since she was a mere dragon princess... but her son would be Omega. The future King of all the dragons.

His birth would see the ice dragons and fire dragons joined in union. His powers would be unrivalled and his birth promised to bring great peace and happiness to The Lost Island, cementing the dynasty of the House of Dragons and extinguishing any claim from the House of Phoenix.

Everything about Omega's birth had been planned, checked and then checked again. His nest was at the top of the highest volcano on the island and smoke would rise when he was born, announcing his arrival to the entire nation.

Ice and fire were not the only elements, however. There were many others including earth, sky and dark dragons. All these dragons had their own unique powers. But Omega would be special. And Monarch wasn't the only dragon anticipating the new arrival. All of the dragons were eagerly awaiting the birth and news had spread all over the island.

In the distance, Monarch heard a low shriek. She quickly turned her attention from the egg. In the distance, she saw a griffin. She was shocked. These beasts lived on Bird Island and were feared by all dragons.

There was a time when these beasts had lived on The Lost Island, but they had been banished to Bird Island many moons ago. No one really remembered why, though there were lots of stories. It was said that just looking at a griffin could cause serious harm to a dragon.

The shriek came again and Monarch nudged closer to the nest. This Griffin was getting awfully close! Griffins never flew this far inland on The Lost Island and Monarch felt increasingly uncomfortable. She began to call softly for her dragon guards, not wanting to disturb her egg.

And then, almost out of nowhere, the Griffin crashed into view. It all happened so quickly, Monarch scarcely knew what was happening and yet at the same time, she seemed to watch the Griffin in slow motion as he swooped low over the nest and deftly snatched the egg from its cradle.

As quickly as he came, he was gone and Monarch howled like she had never howled before. A howl which needed no interpretation.

Chapter 2



He couldn't believe it! He'd actually gone and done it! Everyone on Bird Island would praise him now! He had the Dragon Prince Egg in his clutches! The most powerful dragon to ever exist and he would be saved by a griffin! He would break the curse and griffins would once again be free to roam on The Lost Island! Oh, what a hero he would be!

Icealot flew as quickly as his young wings would take him. He wasn't a fully grown Griffin yet and he soon began to tire. He was only half way across The Lost Island when his claws started to lose their grip on the precious egg.

'Oh no!' exclaimed Icealot. 'I cannot lose THIS egg!' He knew he should call for help. He was well aware that his elders would assist him gleefully but he stopped himself from calling out. He didn't want to share this moment of glory with anyone... least of all his commander, Brutus. He would take ALL the glory... He wasn't good at sharing at all. No! Icealot wanted this to be all about him.

He wanted everyone to know it was HIM who had saved them.

Icealot jostled the egg in his claw to increase his hold but, at that exact second, the egg CRACKED! Icealot dropped the egg and it fell faster than he could possibly dive. He watched it fall helplessly into the river below.

For the second time that day, The Lost Island heard a frantic howl screech over the valley.

Chapter 3



Omega had had an extremely adventurous day so far.... And he hadn't even hatched yet!

But that was about to change!

As the egg hit the water, there was one almighty crack and - rather ahead of schedule - Omega popped into the world.

All of the planning and careful consideration Monarch had done was for nothing.... At this precise moment, Omega should have been starting his **Power Ritual**, which is something all new dragons have, where their parents show them the skills and powers they have been given.

But Omega was not with Monarch or his father, Iceborn, nor was he with Icealot who had taken him from his nest. He was all alone, sitting in a broken shell and bobbing down a river. He didn't know what to do. Looking around forlornly, he instinctively knew something was wrong, but he didn't know what.

For a start, he was cold. Colder than he had ever been. He didn't remember too much from his time in the egg, but he knew for sure he was warm. He wracked his brain... what else did he know? It was warm... no it was hot! Much much hotter than this. But nothing else came to him. He was cold, wet, hungry and lonely. And, as he floated slowly down the river in his

broken shell, Omega began to cry. Not loudly. Almost silent sobs wracked his tiny body.

Then he heard a voice! A dragon was calling in the distance. Not TO him, but definitely about him...

'Would you just look at that Thorn,' pointed out the dragon.

'Hmm,' replied Thorn. 'Looks like a baby dragon floating down the river... Well, I never. Who on earth is he???'

A lightbulb flashed in Omega's head. He knew his name! His name was Omega.

Chapter 4



Monarch, Iceborn and the fire dragons had gathered trying to make sense of what had happened, and, more importantly, what to do about it.

Some dragons wanted to fly to Bird Island to negotiate with the griffins. Others wanted to attack immediately... There were many dragons who were deeply suspicious of griffins! Feeling helpless, Monarch lay silently by the empty nest, tears still streaming down her face, when she noticed something in the corner of her eye. It caught her attention before she could understand the significance of what she was looking at.

And so it took a few blinks of her moist eyes before she sat bolt upright and declared 'The Volcano!!!'

Sure enough, there - for all the dragons to see - was a faint, but growing waft of smoke rising steadily from the Volcano. It had, just as planned, awoken at the birth of Omega.

'He's been born!' bellowed Iceborn.

'He's alive,' whispered Monarch.

Chapter 5



Icealot had flown to the edge of The Lost Island and finally stopped on the first rock he had come to, to rest and eat.

Thoughts swarmed around his head and he desperately needed to think. But try as he might, he had no clue what to do.

What had he done? How had he been so stupid?

He needed help, but couldn't think of anyone who would help him.

The dragons would blame him.

The griffins would blame him.

Life would be worse for everyone because Omega was lost.

He had never felt so alone in his whole life. Thoughts swirled around his head. How he missed his mother and his family... How he had tried to fit in to the orphanage he'd been sent to... How he'd tried to make everyone proud of him...

This had been his moment to prove himself. Bitter tears poured from his eyes.

Icealot considered his options:

He would almost certainly be killed if he landed on The Lost Island. He knew that from the stories he'd been told at home.

He would definitely be killed if he returned home with news of his failed mission. His superiors would not forgive him for losing Omega. That was not the plan.

The rising tide assured him he could not stay where he was.

He had never meant to leave Omega alone. He'd never meant to take him away from his family. But that is exactly what he'd done. Icealot was truly sorry and knew that he, and he alone, had to make this right.

With one last longing gaze at his homeland, Icealot took to the sky and flew back towards the Lost Island.

Chapter 6



Omega looked on warily as the two dragons pulled him to shore.

He had a strong sense that this was not where he was meant to be. It was a sense the two earth dragons shared!

'What on earth?' cried Thorn, the male dragon.

'Well, isn't it just the cutest little baby!' replied his sister, Twig.

'We can't keep him.' argued Thorn.

'Well, we can't just let him float off down the river, now can we?' Twig countered, picking Omega out of the egg.

'The little guy is freezing!' she exclaimed. 'Let's put him near the fire.'

Twig rushed over to the small campfire the dragons had built. It wasn't huge - earth dragons do not need large fires - but it was warmer than the water had been.

Omega felt a rush of excitement as he felt the warmth and he jumped right into the centre of the fire!

'Well... That's answered one question,' chuckled Thorn. 'He's a Fire Dragon all right!'

'But, who on earth is he? And what's his name?' continued Thorn.

Omega, who up until now, had remained silent, suddenly spoke up.
'Omega,' he squeaked.

Thorn and Twig fell back quite surprised. They hadn't expected the baby to speak!

Even Omega was a little shocked!

Thorn regained his composure first and, once again, started chuckling...
'Omega... Omega... what sort of name is that?'

'Baby Fire Dragon comes floating down the river and calls himself Omega! A dragon king! Haha! Whatever next! Couldn't make it up!' he continued.

Twig, on the other hand, was taking it far more seriously. 'It's HIM,' she whispered so quietly she practically mouthed it! She didn't know how or why but the future dragon king was warming himself in the middle of her campfire!

Chapter 7



Monarch was growing increasingly frustrated with the dragons... they just couldn't decide what to do! 'For dragons who SAID everything was checked and rechecked... you don't seem to have considered this at all, do you?' she demanded.

The dragons looked suitably embarrassed. They knew the Queen was right. For all their planning, they had never once considered LOSING Omega!

None of it made sense! The volcano continued to produce a steady stream of smoke, a sign that Omega was thriving and in good hands... but whose hands he was in... they could only guess!

Most puzzling of all was that not one word had been heard from the griffins. A griffin had taken Omega - that they knew for sure - but they were also certain that griffins would have had more than enough time to have been in contact with their list of demands, if this was, indeed, a kidnapping.

'Then it is up to us!' boomed Iceborn, who was stuck resolutely between the dragons and his wife, 'If the griffins won't come to us, then we must go to them!'. Almost immediately, he swept up a small army and they set off for Bird Island.

Other dragons shook their head in disagreement. 'What's the point in trying to reason with griffins?' chimed one... 'He doesn't even know what he's

looking for,' another pointed out woefully, articulating what everyone was thinking but no one had dared mention:

No-one actually KNEW what Omega looked like.

Monarch looked on flabbergasted. Of course! As his mother, she knew. She KNEW.

She knew what he sounded like better than anyone and he knew her. A plan fermented in her head.

Taking advantage of the confusion which had overtaken the meeting, she retreated to the edge of the cave. On reaching it, her heart beating faster and faster with the adrenaline that coursed through her body, she steeled herself.

It was now or never.

She ran as fast as she could towards the cliff edge and plunged over it.

Chapter 8



Icealot circled back over the river, trying to pinpoint the spot he'd dropped the egg. After several laps, he was sure he'd found the right place and swooped in low searching for signs of the egg. When he saw it, he would land, he told himself bravely.

He had no clue if landing on The Lost Island would kill him instantly - there was a good chance it would, but it no longer mattered... It wasn't really a matter of 'if' he'd die... more a matter of 'when'.

Seeing the battered red egg at the side of the river, he took a deep breath, closed his eyes and...

... BANG!!!!

Icealot hit the floor far faster than he had anticipated. It felt like he had been pushed towards the ground and he hooted in pain. His eyes still tightly shut, he reasoned that if he could feel pain, he couldn't be dead. He slowly opened his eyes...

But what he saw standing over him made him shut them again as quickly as he could and wished he HAD died!

For right in front of him stood Flame, the biggest, meanest Phoenix on Bird Island.

What was HE doing here? How did he even know?

'H...H... Hi?' offered Icealot. Flame towered above him.

'Where is he?' Flame spluttered, almost shaking with rage.

Icealot shrugged his shoulders and shrank back into the earth. 'I don't know. I dropped the egg'.

'You STUPID GRIFFIN. You ruined MY plan. I want that dragon DEAD!' howled Flame, 'There'll be dragons all over this now'.

Icealot didn't budge. His mind was reeling. His plan, Flame had said... His plan?? What was his plan? What about the griffins' plan? To bring Omega back? To break the curse?

'B... But... we weren't going to k...kill him, were we?' Icealot could hardly believe he'd had the courage to speak before being spoken to... and rather wished he hadn't.

Flame erupted! 'OF COURSE I AM GOING TO KILL HIM! THEN I CAN WATCH THE DRAGONS TURN ON EACH OTHER! I CAN RULE THEM ALL WHEN THEY ARE DIVIDED.'

Icealot stared desolately at the ground. He'd never wanted to KILL Omega. He hadn't even considered it. He had wanted to be the "Griffin Who Would Be Credited At RETURNING Omega ALIVE".

One glance at Flame told Icealot that THAT was definitely NOT the plan.

'STUPID GRIFFINS!' Flame continued to rant 'YOU ONLY HAD ONE THING TO DO ANY YOU MESSED IT UP.' He'd been tricked. Icealot was devastated. Not only had he lost the egg, but he'd been duped all along.

Icealot's mind raced faster than ever...

But, a small plan began to hatch in his mind.. 'Well, I am the only one who can help you find Omega. I am the only one who has seen him,'

Flame's eyes brightened. 'Oh yes...' he drawled, his tone softening. 'So you are. You might come in useful yet.'

Icealot had only caught the tiniest glimpse of Omega, a glistening white dragon with amazing red fire spikes rising from his back... so it was a little bit of a stretch to say he knew what he looked like...

But Icealot had a plan.

He may not have been completely sure what Omega looked like, but he was absolutely SURE he knew what Omega DIDN'T look like! And that might be just enough to keep Flame away.

Chapter 9



Thorn and Twig slept in turns, never leaving Omega alone. Partly, this was because, if Twig was right, both he and they were in serious danger but also because Omega was what might nicely be termed 'a handful' due to the powers that neither Twig nor Thorn could possibly understand.

Thorn, especially, found it annoying when Omega would make his spikes give him electric shocks when he tried to pick him up! He never seemed to do that to Twig! And when Thorn carried Omega, Omega would breathe on him making him feel 100 years old!!! And, boy, was the baby dragon fast! Some dragon had definitely bestowed speed on the prince!

No matter how they tried, Omega simply couldn't be left alone for a single moment!

Twig may have been driven to find Omega's family because of a maternal sense of love... Thorn absolutely definitely wanted to repatriate Omega because of the chaos he caused everywhere he went! Even a small sneeze or cough could be enough to light a fire!

Thorn sat for a moment to consider what he was about to say... he hardly dared believe he was even thinking it... 'We'll take him home,' he blurted out.

It was a preposterous idea, he knew that.

It would mean leaving their home and crossing into territory ruled by much stronger - and carnivorous - dragons. But he could think of nothing else. Twig would never leave the boy here. And keeping him was not an appealing idea!

While he had no idea how they would do it, he could think of nothing else. Twig agreed in an instant. They packed up some supplies and set about disguising Omega, who was the most dazzling white colour and VERY noticeable.

They used mud and grass to cover his scales, but his fire spikes stuck out regardless of what they did... 'We'll just have to live with those and tell any other dragons we meet he will grow out of them!' declared Twig enthusiastically. Thorn didn't share her optimism but didn't say anything either.

Chapter 10



Monarch felt happier than she had since the moment Omega had been taken. It felt good to be doing 'something', even if she wasn't 100% sure what that 'something' was.

Following the river down from the Volcano towards Bird Island, she glided low, singing as she went:

*'Oh my sweet baby,
How I love you so,
I love you forever,
I'll watch where you go.'*

Small tears formed once again in her eyes. Those words seemed so futile and desperately wrong now. But, they were the only words that came to her... how often she had sung them to her growing egg.

Over and over again, as she peered down on the thick foliage beneath her, she sang the same song.

And then, somewhere far below her, she heard an unmistakable squeaky roar. It was loud enough - and yet strangely childlike. Her heart leaped and she flew around and around, calling now:

'I'm here, Omega,

*I'm here for you,
I am your mother,
My love is true.'*

Again, the squeak greeted her ears. Tears came again, but now, they were tears of happiness. She could barely believe he'd been so close all along! 'He's here,' she said firmly to herself. 'That is my Omega.'

Chapter 11



Icealot and Flame heard the commotion. Icealot tried to pretend he hadn't heard anything, 'I... I think it's just the trees creaking' he offered... but Flame was glaring intently at him.

'Sound familiar, DID IT???' he demanded.

Icealot didn't say a word, but he didn't need to. Everything about his demeanour mirrored what Flame already knew.

Flame took off in the direction of the squeaking with Icealot powerless to do anything but follow meekly behind.

It didn't take long before Flame caught up with Twig and Thorn, who were both occupied with Omega - Twig trying to stop Omega from flying away and Thorn positively encouraging him!

Flame took one look at the baby dragon and whooped with delight. 'Explain who this is, peasant!' he roared. Thorn, who - a moment ago - would have been quite happy to hand Omega over without a further word, was insulted by Flame's tone and instead replied as gruffly as he could,

'Excuse ME! WHO are YOU?'

Flame and Thorn stood so close to each other they were almost touching, neither one prepared to back down.

Think! Icealot screamed silently, 'THINK!'

'That's not him!' Icealot blurted out 'He's not nearly big enough and completely the wrong colour to be from the egg I STOLE.'

He had no idea how convincing he sounded, but it was the best he could come up with. He stressed the word 'stole' and stared directly at Twig who, he'd noticed, was holding Omega protectively. He just hoped it would be enough.

Twig, who was watching Thorn face the huge creature keenly DID notice. She gave Icealot a tiny wink... and then gave Thorn a not so tiny shove...

'This lil fella' she started, speaking just as quickly and lightly as she could, 'He's our grandson, and we're just on our way to take him back to his mother.' Well, she consoled herself, that wasn't a COMPLETE lie!

'Hmmpf!' chimed in Thorn, now aware of Twig's plan, 'And he's a proper handful too. I'll be glad when he's there.' he added truthfully.

Flame stood dead still. With suspicion, he eyed the motley bunch of dragons in front of him. He glanced back at Icealot and then back at Omega.

He wasn't convinced.

'We'll be on our way then,' Twig was desperate to get away. She and Thorn started walking back up the riverbank, trying hard not to run. Still, Flame did not move. He stood as if rooted to the spot. He watched them as they

disappeared around the bend in the river. As if he were waiting for them to leave, he relaxed. 'He's here,' he said finally, 'And no-one seems to know he's gone...'

Flame HAD believed his story!

Thorn had sensed Flame's piercing gaze on his back and, as soon as they had disappeared from view, set about making a tunnel.

It is a power only earth dragons possess: They can build tunnels and caves with amazing speed. Twig stood close by, holding Omega as tightly as she could, keeping a watchful eye out for approaching danger.

Flame had still not moved, and Icealot dared to believe that the earth dragons might get far enough away but any hope he had was dashed when he saw Monarch soar into view. He might not have known exactly what Omega looked like, but he was all too well aware of Monarch and he was acutely aware that Flame was too.

Flame's roar was thunderous with anger. He sped after Twig and Thorn like the wind itself. Hearing the noise, Monarch responded with an equally loud and equally terrifying roar. She was desperate to find Omega.

And Omega was desperate to be found! As he looked up at the majestic dragon above him, he instinctively knew that that was where he needed to be.

Try as she might, Twig couldn't hold Omega any longer. Up and up he flew, squawking boisterously now he saw his mother. He giggled through his squeaks and his fire spikes stood proudly on his back, crackling with energy.

Flame wasted no time in following Omega into the sky, leaving Icealot in no doubt that Flame would deal with HIM later.

In the blink of an eye, Monarch's joy turned to terror as she saw Flame streaking after Omega. She longed to hold Omega, but knew what she must do. She straightened her body and headed directly for Flame. She smashed into Flame at full speed, sending Omega flying back to earth with a bump.

Twig picked Omega up and held him close. He wanted to go to Monarch, she knew that, but she also knew that the phoenix who had been so rude to Thorn meant no good whatsoever.

Monarch and Flame crashed to the ground with an almighty **THUD**.

With both dragons dazed, Thorn spotted his opportunity.

'Get into the tunnel!' he ordered Twig but Twig hesitated.

Thorn did not appreciate the lack of speed Twig was displaying.

'NOW!' he ordered. Twig motioned to Icealot. 'Him?'

Thorn thought he would explode with frustration, but he also knew that Twig was right. This young creature had helped them and was, as far as anyone could see, as petrified as they were.

'Fine... Him... NOW!' Icealot needed no further encouragement. He bounded over to Twig and Thorn, overjoyed to be with such kindly dragons.

Thorn dragged Icealot back to reality. 'We're not out of this yet, lad.' he said, to no one in particular but with Icealot in mind.

Omega sat meekly in the half light of the cave. He wanted to go to Monarch, he knew that is where he belonged, but Twig held him tight. 'Not just yet, little one,' she breathed softly, as much to calm herself as the little dragon beside her.

They listened in silence as the battle raged outside. 'Well,' Thorn said finally, 'Now that we are here, you might as well fill us in.' The trio looked expectantly at Icealot.

Chapter 12



Monarch's mind raced. A phoenix? Why was she fighting a phoenix? Why did a phoenix have Omega? Surely she was looking for a griffin?

But there was no time to think. Flame was up and poised to attack her again. It didn't matter why right now.

Flame lunged at her neck, and Monarch swiped him with her wing. Flame retaliated with his talons, sinking them into Monarch's back, and Monarch floored him with her tail, the spikes of her tail dragging through Flame's flesh.

Monarch and Flame continued to circle each other both intent on finding the other's weak spot. They were equally matched in size and strength and both possessed fire powers. Neither one was prepared to give up this fight.

Bleeding badly, Flame was weakening. Monarch went for his neck. But as she did, Flame grabbed her tail, dragging her down.

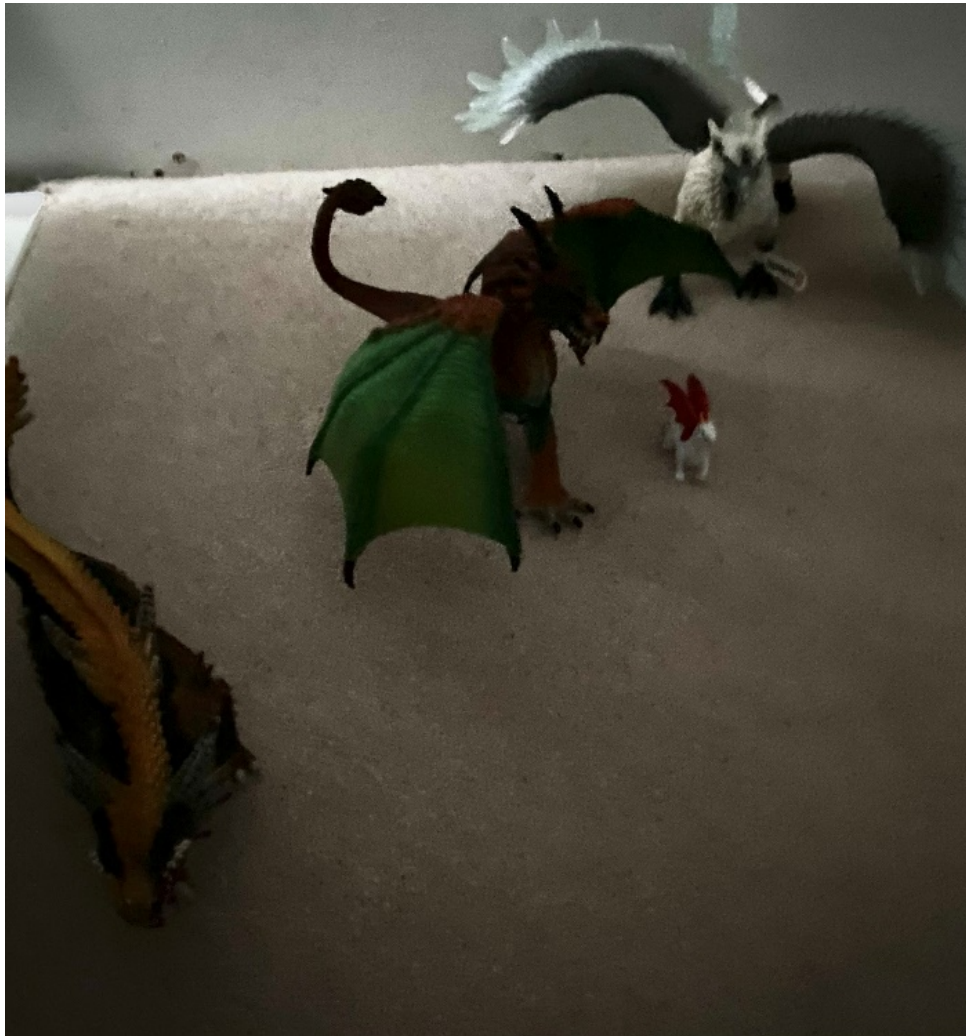
She fell awkwardly and, as she tried to regain her composure, realised that she had hurt her wing. She could no longer fly. Flame sensed his victory and approached her again. Monarch knew that, while she might be able to hold him off for a little while, she couldn't defeat him on her own now.

She had to attract help without making noise... She remembered how she and Iceborn had communicated when they first met.... This was risky, she was

well aware of that, but it was her only hope. She tilted her head towards the sky and puffed out ring after ring of smoke which rose higher and higher.

Suddenly he was above her. Monarch steeled herself and looked up... and she smiled.

Chapter 13



Omega, Twig and Thorn had listened intently to Icealot's story: How he had lost his family in the famine; how he had been told that the dragons held the key to breaking the griffins' curse; how he had been told that stealing the egg, and its triumphant return, would lead to peace between the two nations. And how, he now knew, he'd been tricked and the phoenix they could hear outside wanted Omega dead.

'I thought I would die when I landed on The Lost Island,' Icealot said, truthfully.

Twig looked at him in confusion 'Griffins would die???' she asked incredulously. 'It's not griffins who die... dragons will die if they look directly at a griffin.' she added, repeating what she herself had been told.

Thorn interrupted, 'Well, it seems both the griffins and the dragons were wrong.' he suggested, pointing out that they were, in fact, looking directly at Icealot who was, last time he'd checked... a griffin. 'There's been so many stories told, no-one knows what the truth is... But it seems to me, it's not the griffins OR the dragons we need to be worried about.' Thorn said thoughtfully.

'So, let me see if I've got this,' Omega offered, 'Dragons don't kill griffins and griffins don't kill dragons.' Thorn gave a wry chuckle.

It would seem that the youngest of them all was also the wisest!

Chapter 14



Flame looked at Monarch quizzically. He was just about to win, and here she was smiling happily up at him? For a second, he was unsure what to do... was it a trap? Monarch certainly didn't LOOK like a dragon staring at her nemesis, as she raised her good wing to protect her face.

That question was answered for Flame almost before he had asked it.

The back of Flame's neck felt the icy cold first. A blast so cold he froze where he was.

His fire power rendered useless.

Monarch bathed in the coldness behind her protective wing.

For behind Flame hovered Iceborn.

Behind Iceborn was a small army of dragons.

And behind the dragons was a delegation of griffins.

Each and every one of them in awe of the sheer power of Iceborn.

Iceborn landed and dragged Flame away from his wife, telling his army to guard him should he defrost.

He turned to help Monarch up. Monarch hugged him tightly whispering, 'I've found him!'

Iceborn took a step back to look at Monarch properly, 'Omega?' he asked hopefully.

Monarch called softly. It's OK now, she was saying.

No more fighting.

Chapter 15



Omega twisted again in Twig's grip. She, too, sensed that the call was genuine and let Omega go. He flew from the cave in an instant and straight into Monarch who, on account of her broken wing, was knocked back to the ground. But she didn't mind one little bit. She hugged Omega with every ounce of energy she had left.

'That wasn't quite the meeting we had planned for you,' she admonished, but she was laughing now. And so was Omega.

Twig and Thorn emerged from the tunnel. Iceborn roared with laughter, peeling his son from Monarch, he squeezed him tightly 'That's my boy!'. He could scarcely believe his baby dragon had been protected by earth dragons.

Iceborn quickly regained his regal composure and ordered everyone to return to the volcano including Twig and Thorn.

Iceborn looked perplexed 'And WHO is HE?' he boomed.

'I'm Icealot. I stole your egg,' Icealot said bravely, 'I meant him no harm and I am truly sorry.'

Iceborn's eyes hardened, but Thorn and Twig quickly verified his story and Monarch was sure that this was the creature that had taken the egg.

'Bring him too,' Iceborn ordered, 'Now let's go home.'

Chapter 16



Iceborn, Monarch and Omega landed at the Volcano first, closely followed by Twig and Thorn, the earth dragons and Icealot the griffin. The other dragons looked on in amazement.

'Griffins? Earth dragons? At the Volcano on The Lost Island? Whatever next?' wailed someone in the crowd.

At that precise moment, Flame, the Phoenix King, came into view, heavily guarded by ice dragons, puddles of water dripping behind him. Suddenly earth dragons seemed perfectly reasonable!

Iceborn rose to address the assembled crowd. The silence was deafening.

'Omega is found!' he bellowed. 'The enemy is NOT, and never was, the griffins.'

Exactly 24 hours since Omega's rather unplanned entrance into the world, his **Power Ritual** commenced.

As a prince, especially one who joined the two most powerful dragon clans together (the Fire Dragons and the Ice Dragons), he could expect the most lavish gifts possible.

From his parents, he was given the highest powers of both Ice and Fire. They were declared first as the most important. After these had been

presented, a line of dragons formed in front of Omega with each dragon presenting and explaining the gift bequeathed to the young prince.

As the power ritual was drawing to a close, Thorn spoke up, 'I would like to present a gift.'

A murmur went around the hall. What on earth could an Earth Dragon give a Fire Dragon prince? But Thorn moved forward, disregarding the disdainful looks. Monarch welcomed him with a warm smile 'Thank you, Thorn, we would be honoured to accept your gift.'

Thorn handed over a small brown package, quite unlike any of the large ornate gifts Omega had received so far.

Omega opened it and peered inside, 'Umm... what is it?'

Thorn paused before he answered, 'It's the gift of contentment.'

'Contentment?' snorted one particular snobby courtier. 'Omega can have anything he wants! He does NOT need to be gifted contentment.'

Thorn glanced in the direction of the voice and then returned his attention to Omega 'You have great things. Far greater than I will ever have. But this is my advice to you: It is the man who is contented who is rich.'

After the day they'd had, Monarch and Iceborn were deeply moved by Thorn's wise and kind gesture. Before Thorn had a chance to move back,

Iceborn stopped him 'Your wisdom, your kindness and your courage have brought Omega safely back to us. How can we repay you?'

Thorn looked back at Twig before he spoke, 'I want for nothing, Sir, but my sister would like a family. We would like to take Icealot to come and live with us.' Iceborn glimpsed at Twig and Icealot standing together hopefully and grinned, 'What a wonderful idea! It is agreed! From this day forward...' Iceborn announced to the crowd, 'Griffins are permitted on The Lost Island.'

And so it turned out that Icealot DID break the Curse of the Griffins!

We hope that you and your family and friends enjoy the book that you have created.

This project was co-ordinated and facilitated by Clare Ford, Founder of Switched ON! the global online academy which is re-defining education beyond academic success.

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A long time ago in a Lost Land a war is raging. The once peaceful Griffins and Dragons get caught up in the evil manipulations of the Phoenixes.

This rollercoaster of a story has many twists and turns, so hold on tight!