

Sir Wilfred and the Dragon

“All right, you win”, said the dragon. “I suppose now you slay me, steal my gold, and ride into the village to tell everyone what a brave boy you’ve been. Get on with it, then.”

Sir Wilfred was surprised to hear the dragon speak. It took the shine off of what should have been his proudest moment.

“Well, yes. That’s the plan. After all, you do terrify the villagers. Every time you fly overhead, they expect you to eat somebody. And they’re rather poor and could use some of this huge pile of gold you’re sitting on.”

“Really? I’m only doing what comes naturally. Do you want me to get fat through lack of exercise? Besides, I’ve never actually eaten one of them. If you ask me, they rather enjoy a good scare from time to time. Breaks up the boredom of village life. I expect they tell stories about it afterwards to impress their friends.”

Sir Wilfred was getting confused. “Well, how about if I don’t slay you, and just give your hoard of gold to the poor instead?”

“So that you can look brave, generous *and* merciful? Oh, the girls will love that, won’t they! And why should I agree? Most of this gold was my father’s, and his father’s before him. Why should I give it to a lot of smelly peasants I don’t know? It’s your business if you want to give your money away, but don’t go telling me what to do with my mine.”

Despite having his sword pointed at the dragon’s throat, Sir Wilfred felt he was losing the battle. “But you don’t need all this gold, do you?”

“So? Do you really need that sword you’re so keen on waving about? I like having my gold around me, and at least I don’t go around disturbing people who are minding their own business. Live and let live, that’s my motto. Now, while usually I’d love to chat, it’s time for my afternoon nap. Either get on and slay me or shove off.”

This story was written in response to a request for resources that would fit in with the topic of dragons. It uses the familiar device of subverting fairytale stereotypes, à la “Shrek”. The story is a more accessible alternative to U A Fanthorpe’s excellent poem, “Not My Best Side” - itself inspired by Paolo Uccello’s painting, “St George and the Dragon”. These can be googled easily.

It might lead to questions about showing off, greed, need, enjoying being scared, or heroism.

You might afterwards to some group work to generate new dialogues that give a twist to other fairytales or traditional stories, which could themselves be used as stimulating for future enquiries.