

3.

Anywhere. *Anywhere at all.*

It could have been some icy tundra, some barren wasteland that welcomed Figment next; it could have been the bowels of perdition, some underwater ruin, or space itself, some alien realm unto which one might be lost forever. Despite his newfound size and power, at the moment of passage between portals, despite all their scientific potential and knowledge, all Figment could imagine was home.

That much mixed unhappily with disappointment when he opened his eyes to a vast wilderness, one so sprawling-wide that even the gigantic dragon felt swallowed by it. Having exited Spyro's world at some 500 feet tall, Figment easily scoured for any geographical markers, any objects of the familiar by which to measure himself. Such quantification usually involved tables, chairs, boxes and doorways; having to look *down* to find treetops and boulders was every bit as foreign as the world which he was now in. His overgrown optimism butted against the frustration, but won out. Gradually.

"Boy, this certainly doesn't look like London. Shoot. Okay, well, let's see," Figment murmured, shaking his head a few times, to get the residual lag out of it. "Markers, markers..."

Alright, there were certainly woods about, lots and lots and lots of woods. The canopies of many mingling greens managed to reach up to his ankles, which seemed fairly impressive, at his size. Beyond the woodlands were rolling hills and slate mountains, placing the giant dragon in what must have been an entirely untouched region of...*wherever he was*. Was it still the same planet, even?

"Oh!"

He perked up at last, as the thought arrived on a late train. He patted his enlarged scales over worriedly, before opening what he realized had been a closed fist; now opened, he saw the candy bag safely ensconced, therein, and sighed loudly.

"Oh. Whew! I must have been holding tight, on reflex..."

He thought a moment, then looked back at the bag, puzzled. Had he been holding it at normal size, it would have been about half his size...and if normal-him was on his palm, at his current size...then he would have been much smaller, in a palm that big, so...why?

The math came quickly; when he finished, Figment blinked and looked himself over.

"I...I'm smaller! Er, well, not so big as I was, at least...but how?"

Roughly 250 feet, half the size he had swollen up to before entering the portal. That was the end of the equation, and no lie.

"Okay, think," he hummed, running his free hand along his huge horns. "Let's analyze the story, so far: I was sucked into a portal, wound up in another world...I didn't shrink when I went through the first one...I was able to imagine a bigger portal, with a lot of effort...but going through the bigger one removed a portion of my size...the bag didn't shrink, relative to the trees and rocks down there, so it

was just me that was affected...how fascinating! Heh! And I thought I'd have a lot to tell Blair, back at the lab, earlier!"

"This isn't London?"

A now-known voice interjected, smaller and lighter—but still known. Figment proved more than big enough to shake the terrain when he did a small leap of surprise, and turned around. His jaw dropped, and whether it was out of dismay or joy...well, who was to say.

"Spryo?" Figment gasped, looking down at the feral dragon. "What...I thought you would have...you didn't return to your realm, through the portal?"

Spyro looked up at the towering Figment, and right away, Figment noticed it: he had diminished in size, too. Compared to his somewhat-shrunken self, Spyro must have been, what...50 feet tall, at the horns? He remained feral, and his swollen-out muscles were certainly undisturbed, but now that made two of them, lessened. Finally, the smaller purple dragon looked the area over, then cocked his head.

"I...don't know this place," he began, raising a brow. "So, I guess not! Looks like we're traveling buddies, after all!"

"I need a moment to think, since we're both here. Now, a portal of that size...must have taken more energy to create," Figment thought aloud, as Spyro's confusion persisted. "We both lost a chunk of our size...maybe it's like a passage fee, a tollway-tax, or fuel of some sort?"

"It costs us *size* to travel?" Spyro scoffed, blinking as indignantly as possible (which, it turned out, was very doable for him). "Nuts to that! I'll just use my wings!"

He flapped them a few solid times, then chuckled.

"Hey...hey, yeah! Figment, check it out! My wings are better! They actually feel great!"

Figment loomed further down over his new friend, investigating. Spyro might have been intimidated, were he not busied with showing off.

"Wow! It...healed you, too!" Figment replied, wagging his tremendous tail some. "Interesting! If I'm correct, then...whatever portal we need, I can imagine, if I concentrate enough...it's untested, but the next portal we go through, I can see if my theories are correct or not!"

"The next portal?" Spyro repeated, as if tasting something foreign. He wasn't sure he liked it. "You mean, the portal *back*, right? I'm not just leaving my home and poor Sparx behind, here!"

"Well, heh, I...didn't land where I imagined, so...I don't think I have control over the destination. Only the means to traverse them! At least, for now."

"So, the more we travel, the...further from home we all could be getting?"

"Well...we don't know that yet. But let's not get discouraged, yes? All of us can—wait. Where's Cynder? Where's Ripto?"

The both of them looked about again, this time seriously. The valley remained as modest and quiet as before, with nary a giant humanoid dragoness nor a billowed-out balloon of an evil dinosaur in sight.

"That's something to watch out for," Figment groaned, biting his lip. "We didn't all land in the same location, it looks like."

"So...we find them, then," Spyro started, leaning in like a big brawny cat, until his back popped. "We can scout better from the air. Can you fly, Figment?"

The bigger dragon hummed thoughtfully, and flapped his wings several times—but the sheer weight of his enlarged bulk kept him pinned to the ground, and pinned fast. He snorted, then shook his head with an embarrassed grin.

"I don't think so. I'm likely way, way too heavy to get liftoff."

Spyro nodded, then started to attempt flight; for all his muscle and power, it actually proved much harder than usual for him to get airborne, and by the time he was, he could only get about as high up as Figment's head.

"Oof, o-okay," he puffed, clearly struggling, "I can do it...but I'm not used to being this heavy! Wow! This'll take some practice!"

"If you tire out, then just climb up on me, okay?" Figment offered. Spyro huffed as he hovered awkwardly in place, though he was smiling.

"Heh...thanks! So, uh...which...which way?"

Figment thudded around in an uncertain circle as he investigated. He squinted, then gasped, and pointed far to the West. In his world, it would have been the West, so that's what he went with.

"There! A castle!"

"Oh, no, not another one," Spyro moaned.

"It's much...well, okay, it's still a bit rough looking," Figment corrected, squinting longer. "It looks in better shape than Ripto's lair...but it's covered in something..."

Indeed, the entire structure seemed...scribbled over, in black ink, thin messes tangling angrily about it, covering and clinging. *Thorns?*

"They should really fire their gardener," Spyro snarked, drawing Figment's attention.

"You can see that well from here?"

"Well enough, sure. Those are thorns, tons of them, like a forest. Are you sure you wanna go there, of all places? I think we lucked out, here, and wound up in a way nicer area. Besides, while I could see Ripto liking it, why would Cynder willingly go somewhere so miserable?"

"True, but...we should really talk to someone, and someone more likely lives there...Let's at least head that way, and see if anyone knows more about where we are. We can always ask if anyone's seen any other dragons about!"

"Yeah, fair."

It took all of five minutes of practice, before Spyro gave up trying to fly any further, and gladly landed on Figment's colossal shoulder. The oddity of having a giant perched on *his* shoulder mingled with his efforts to step as gently, as politely as imaginable forwards. With clawed feet the size of small houses, it was more of a chore than Figment was mentally prepared for, giving him yet another plate to balance on a figurative stick.

Each footfall sent the still lands into a light shake, and the impact vibrations tickled up and back out under his feet every time. The canopies of the forests below wobbled and swayed, not quite violently, but noticeably.

"It's a little strange," Spyro started, laying draped over Figment's shoulder, "you'd think there would be a bunch of critters running away, with all the disturbance, but there's nothing. Nobody."

The moment he said it, it lodged in Figment's brain, unmovable and hard.

"You're right," he muttered, as the distance between themselves and the castle dwindled rapidly. "The whole region feels...deserted, doesn't it?"

"Bet you it's tied to whatever went wrong in that creepy castle, up ahead."

"Bet you're right—"

Figment's hefty thuds slowed, then stopped, prompting Spyro to look up at him.

"Do you hear that?" he asked. Spyro's mouth was already open to ask why they had paused, but when he closed it again and listened, he did hear it. Faint as it was, he heard it.

"Yeah, what is that? Is it...crying?"

"I didn't think our hearing was that great, especially from up here," Figment added, his brows knit in bafflement. "Something would have to be closer to us that we realize, or...fairly big."

The nearer to the castle they drew, the more pronounced it became.

"It's got to be from there," Figment said.

"What a shock," Spyro groused.

Up close, the castle stood much taller than either of them originally grasped; its parapets and spires stretched up high and mighty, several times taller than even Figment. Given its true scale, it was less of a surprise to find that whatever they were hearing should be harder to spot against it. Yet, what did clear the other side of the middle-span of the castle center was surprise enough to suit them both.

It wasn't Cynder, or Ripto. But, it was another dragon. And it was definitely crying.

Both males knew the curves indicative of their better halves, and from the sound of the sobbing, it was definitely a female. Great clawed hands covered her muzzle as she wept into it, leaving only her curved horns and flared-out jaw fins exposed. The majority of her feral body was a polished ebony pitch, dark violet plates cresting up her belly and chest, matching the interior sails of her otherwise-black wings. On casual inspection, she must have been roughly 30 feet tall, more than enough to have put fear in either of the males, at their old sizes. At Figment's current, however, she could have been hugged up like a scaly teddy bear. At the moment, seeing her in such a low state, that was about all Figment wanted to do.

"Excuse me," Figment spoke, as lightly as possible, at his size.

Immediately, the dragoness started, wide eyes glowing green as she spun on them, nearly tumbling off of the thorn-tangled castle.

"Ah!" she shrieked, backing away. "Heavens, a giant!"

"Oh, goodness, I apologize," Figment stammered, rebuilding the matchstick tumble of whatever it was he had meant to say. "Sorry to startle you! Ah, we heard you crying, my friend and I, and we're a bit new to the region..."

"I've never seen...anything as big as you," she huffed, openly eyeing Figment, up and down. "Incredible! Where do you come from, that you could grow to such a scale?"

"You were crying," Spyro interrupted, bluntly. "What's wrong?"

"Oh," the dragoness sighed, letting out one last residual sob. "I suffer from a curse, is why. A foul enchantment, crafted by forces that wish to undo this once-great kingdom. Were you both perhaps afflicted, as well?"

Spyro and Figment exchanged looks, and Spyro rode the wave of motion that came from the larger dragon's errant shrug.

"I...don't think so, no," Figment replied. "You look alright, to me, by dragon standards."

"But therein lay the curse," she groaned, motioning over herself with her huge hands. "I have been altered to this form. Altered...by three vengeful fairies! The neglect of the King and Queen, their failure to invite them to the reveal of their newborn daughter...it was too severe a dishonor, and they lashed out by cursing the princess, and the kingdom itself. Upon her young adulthood, the princess Aurora pricked her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel; the curse lay under threat of death to her, but when I used my power as the court magician to lessen its blow, to render her death a deep, deep sleep...the enraged fairies countered, by transforming me!"

"I *told* you!" Spyro whispered sharply. Figment put up a massive hand to him, in recognition, as the dragoness continued on:

"To this day, the princess sleeps, imprisoned in this castle. Even with my new form, I cannot clear the bramble of thorns completely. The kingdom, its people, the animals, all slumber. I alone am

left, tortured, destined to remain a powerless protector. Every time I hack and flame at the thorns, I grow more tired and worn-out, while they grow back to full insult. I simply have no more left to give."

"Oh, no," Figment said, his voice heavy. "How awful!"

"Where are the fairies now?" Spyro asked, still blunt.

"They...remain hidden, where I cannot hope to retaliate against them. Were I able, I would turn the flames they beset me with back upon them!"

"Fair," Spyro continued. "Sorry to cut in, but have you seen another dragoness around—"

"Their agent!" the dragoness hissed, her eyes flaring brighter. "I have! They summoned her through a great disc in the skies, several hours prior! She does their bidding, and attacked me! The cowardly fiend fled when I defended myself—who knows where she may lurk now? I'd wager, the same place those foul enchanters hide!"

"Whoa, hold up," Spyro cut in, glaring. "Attacked?"

"It has to be her," Figment murmured to him, as quietly as his gigantic size allowed.

"No way," Spyro snorted, offended. "Look, I think we both know that isn't how Cynder would act, especially just arriving in town."

"Agreed, but...she's corroborating things only we would know..."

"I still say no. It hasn't been long since I met Cynder, but I *trust* her, like I trust you. Do you trust me?"

"Absolutely."

"Then I call *bunk*."

By the time the exchange was over, the dragoness had finished her last bit of weeping, and was looking up at the both of them, imploring.

"Would you help me?" she asked, at length. "I'm sorry to ask at all and burden you so, but...the fairies don't know you, and you might be able to beseech them to lift the curse."

"What if they say no?" Figment rightly asked.

"Then they would need to be defeated," came her answer; it was about as blunt as Spyro's.

"Ah, I see," Figment replied. "Where did you see the dragoness go, after your confrontation?"

"To the East."

She pointed a dark claw out beyond the castle, far into the sprawling woodlands, which vanished between two tall, gate-like mountaintops. Spyro made to talk, when Figment got there first:

"We would be happy to help! Count on us, Miss..."

"Alas," she moaned, hanging her head, curving her lengthy neck, "I cannot recall my own name anymore. But you could call me a *friend*, for now. Perhaps, upon lifting the curse, I might remember."

Figment was already moving to the East (his understanding of geography in his own world had proven correct) with a series of booming steps. Spyro fidgeted openly, but stayed quiet a moment or two longer.

"Oh, thank you! Thank you!" she cheered, waving from between parapets, as they marched heroically off. "I will not forget this!"

When they cleared a large slope and lost sight of both her and the castle, Spyro let loose:

"What are we doing?" he balked, cocking his head. "Figment, you don't seriously believe her—even if she's not a bad guy, she isn't telling us everything. I can tell."

"I'm with you," Figment soothed, smiling. "But it's the best chance at finding Cynder, and getting to the bottom of all this confusion. Besides, even if I manage another portal right this minute, we couldn't leave without her...or I suppose, Ripto..."

"Oh, by all means, buddy, you can leave him," Spyro sneered. "I wonder where he even is. If he lost the same amount of size going through the portal, like the rest of us, then he would still be pretty big. Easy to spot, you know?"

"Exactly, sound reasoning. You know, you would be fun to work with, in the lab."

"Hah, you think so?"

"Why not?" Figment laughed, lightening the mood every time it sagged, between booming footfalls over snapping trees and jittering rocks. "I love Blair, er, Blarion...but I wouldn't hate having a fellow dragon around, as a friend! It's pretty much all humans, back in London."

"I dunno," Spyro thought, though his tail wagged back and forth, sweeping across Figment's scales. "I wouldn't want to be cooped up too long, no offense. I bet this is your first real adventure."

"Well, my first, without Blair."

"Don't get a big head or anything, but you're handling yourself pretty good!"

"You think so? The rest of me got big enough."

"Hey, even small, I've had loads of adventures. I'm fine with pulling another, plus-sized!"

"I guess we both spent our lives being little ones. It certainly is different. Feels good being big, but strange, too! I'm slower and heavier, and everything looks so different from up...*wait a minute!*"

"What?"

"We're both so high up, now...those fairies wouldn't be silly enough to hide way up in the open, they would be hidden...by..."

"Trees," Spyro finished, looking out anxiously over Figment's bulk. "Great. We managed to overlook the obvious. Should I climb down and check the forests? I can actually peek below the canopies, at my size..."

"Good idea...I'll walk with you, and check for...I don't know, any signs, over the forest treeline."

"You got it!"

Surprisingly, Spyro sailed straight down with such grace that he hardly made a dent in landing among the trees. Right away, his muzzle vanished with a series of small snaps and bending trunks as he began peeking down underneath, searching quickly. Ready to take up his own part, Figment scanned the skies, then the farther reaches of the landscape. They had neared the entry between the mountains, and the valley between them sank into unknowable darkness, hidden from the sunlight.

Either they were hiding in the woods, the shadowed valley just beyond, or underground; that meant to look for smoke, candlelight, or some opening in the earth, some cavern or pit. At Cynder's size, were she also shrunken down enough, traveling far enough away would have proven difficult, meaning she shouldn't have gotten far. She had a better chance at flying than either of them, though...

"Where...would they be, that a flying dragon couldn't find them?" he wondered, thinking hard.

Then, down far, far into the gap, he saw it, faintly: a single spire of smoke.

"Spyro!"

The trip into the shadowed valley only punctuated the deceptive nature of its appearance, from outside. In the sun, it seemed reachable in minutes, especially at Figment's massive size. Yet, over half an hour later, it remained as far off as before, even as the pair of dragons waded into the opening between mountains, the light fading fast.

"Good grief, how much further could it be?" Spyro moaned, leaning out over Figment's shoulder once again. "What is it, running away?"

"I'm a bit more used to science," Figment muttered absently, "so with spells and enchantments, who knows?"

Another minute, another half mile or so, at Figment's size; still, the smoke remained as far. Neither wanted to be the one to say it, so Spyro said something else, instead:

"I've got an idea."

"Great! What is it?"

"After what you did, back in my world," Spyro started, narrowing his eyes. "I know it only goes so far, and it doesn't work for everything, but..."

"What?"

"Imagine it's coming towards us."

Naturally, there was a pause.

"As in, pull it nearer?" Figment asked, laying the tracks of logic down ahead of him.

"Why not? We aren't going to catch up to it, like this."

The absurdity of that idea crashed into the absurdity of the suggestion. That it won out was even more so; but, there it was.

"Just focus on pulling it closer, I dunno."

"I...*suppose* I can try it, sure..."

Rather than feign any sort of fancy or elaborate preparations, Figment instead set his sights on the spire of smoke, with every scrap of focus he could muster. Rather than imagining himself walking to it, he imagined the landscape itself pulling toward them, as thought on a great tugged blanket...only the world remained stubbornly set in place.

Too big, he thought. You're pulling too much. If there's smoke, it's from a house, most likely. Pull the house, and just the house.

Though he was surely thinking to himself, the more he focused, the more the words sounded like Blarion's than his own. Was this a lecture?

Hah...he would know as much!

Spyro could feel himself sink a little as Figment's huge shoulders relaxed, losing the built up tension from the journey. The humongous dragon smiled a happy bit, the familiarity of his creator doing enough to set his focus at full.

Right. Right, it's just another experiment at the lab!

A second time, Figment imagined the pull. The forest between the mountains faded off, until there was only the smoke, a ghostly thread that his mind soon wrapped around, and began to tug on, until a soft crack in the trees rose, far away, and to Spyro's amazement, it began to move closer.

"Hey...alright! It's working!"

The tug wavered as his concentration faltered, before Figment redoubled, and the smoke began to creep unwillingly nearer, then nearer, still, closing the magical gap between them slowly. Spyro covered his muzzle with both hands, wanting to talk, but letting his comrade imagine harder, as the smoke pulled grudgingly closer, faster, going from a crawl to a run, until it was nearly in front of them.

It was only when it chugged close enough that a chimney began to peek up from the trees, then a humble thatched roof, then windows and brick...

"Whu," Spyro gulped, blinking several times. "Is...uh, is the house...growing?"

Figment closed his eyes and kept it up, having to pull more and more, feeling the increasing mass of the house creating more and more to pull on, as though the dwelling were blowing itself up in resistance to his force. In seconds the roof was up to Figment's belly, then up past his chest, outpacing him with a frightening speed, until even he gasped and yelped aloud as its door swung open, and the 700-foot house swallowed them both into itself.

The sides of the growing house nearly met a narrow gap between the mountains before it stopped growing, paused, and closed its huge door. There was only a few moments' passing before the massive house shivered, then shrank right back down to its normal state, sinking back quietly beneath the canopy of the forests, and vanishing outright.

The interior, so far as the entrapped dragons knew, was just that. It was a house. A humble, ordinary home, comfortable and quaint, lit by candlelight and a warmed hearth. Figment only reached as high up as the wooden handle of the door now, somewhat taller than he would normally be, but not by much. Spyro, on the other hand, remained parrot-sized, stuck on his shoulder still.

"Wow," Spyro muttered. "I'm just going to say it: it could feel a whole lot more *evil*, in here..."

"It's...actually nice," Figment added, before looking them both over. "I can't believe it grew to fit us! We..."

Figment stopped as he looked out the window on the right; he padded over to it, peeking up over the lower rim, and gasped.

"Wait...the trees! The trees outside, they're normal, they're above us again! Did...did the house shrink back down into the forest? Do you think that we've shrunken with it?"

"We must have," Spyro murmured, before panicking where he rested. "Wait, I've been shrunk!? Even further down? That...but...I'm smaller than ever, then!"

"Well, we don't know that's the case," Figment quickly corrected, offering up a sloppily lopsided grin. "We could ask the fairies about it, I suppose. Their home looks so cheery and reasonable, it...seems hard to believe they wouldn't match it..."

"Where are they, anyhow?"

"Uh..."

Figment walked around a bit, floorboards creaking *hello* here and there as he went. There was the classic cast-iron cauldron hanging up in the hearth, over a crackling fire, there was the table with a marbled vase and a cacophony of loud-colored flowers; four wooden chairs framed a large table, one in particular taken care of to a conspicuous degree (the other three were dusted and clean, yet the one in question was polished and practically shining). A few decorative dressers snuggled into the corners,

shadowed calmly by the firelight, a coat rack by the doorway. Large oak beams added stability and surety to the ceiling, while a room full of soft, huge beds peeked at them from down a hallway. Four beds, in total.

All in all, it was...nice. Very nice. Figment nearly found himself moving to one of the beds, overwhelmed by some warm comfort. There wasn't one cold or desolate inch of the place, and the longer he tarried, the greater his willingness to stay grew.

"This has to be the place," Spyro chuckled. "It's too clean to be my home."

"It's even nicer than the lab," Figment hummed, not sure where to go next, now that they—

"So, where to now?" Spyro asked, clearly thinking the same.

"Ah, well," Figment stammered, rubbing his neck. "Hold on, let me set this down, it's been getting heavy in one hand..."

He set the bag of candies down, letting it sag against the table, before stopping, then looking back at it, wide-eyed.

"Ack! T-the bag?"

"What?"

"The bag, the candy bag!"

He pointed, and Spyro gawked. The bag was there, fine and well...but it was regular-sized, compared to Figment, about half his own stature once more. He gulped, then opened up the top flap, revealing mutually-sized candies aplenty.

"Wow, it reset the bag's size?" Spyro mused, staring. "Or...did it stay the same, and we shrunk back down to it? Wait, it got normal, but I'm smaller? Argh, I can't tell what's what..."

A soft rustling outside made both dragons turn, just as the door opened. Inside stepped three small, older women, gracefully nearing their golden years. All three wore pointed hats and capes, monochromatic dresses partially hidden under them. One was tall and wore red, another medium and green, the other shorter and blue. In the moment it took for them to enter, Figment and Spyro were already backed away across the room, nearly thumping into the table, just as a strange sort of slight wind rushed in past. The three busily closed the door, all talk and murmur, not noticing them yet:

"There simply isn't enough in the forests, I fear," the green one sighed, shaking her head, as the blue one closed the door all the way, giving it an extra push to make sure the latch had caught, as the red one turned and slid the lock in.

"Well, we can't despair of that," the red one said, authoritatively. "If one path ends, you pick another, and we—good heavens!"

All three women started, leaping back at the same time as Spyro and Figment (well, Spyro just rode along as Figment did the leaping). The women's wings flared out behind them, and immediately,

half the questions both dragons had proved unneeded.

"I-I'm sorry," Figment sputtered, putting his hands up submissively. "I, er, *we* were passing by, looking for three fairies, and this house just loomed up so big that we couldn't get away, and the door opened, a-and—"

The trio were already quiet, simply watching with narrowed eyes as Figment rambled, until the red one put up a quieting hand.

"No, no. You're alright, my dear," she soothed, already smiling. "You, ah, just gave us a start. We...haven't had guests, in some time."

The other two nodded, one giving a wry scoff, the other nodding sadly.

"You aren't upset?" Spyro asked, drawing their attention. Clearly, they hadn't noticed him, at his smaller size. "We didn't break in, I swear!"

"You couldn't have," the green one said, mustering her own smile. "The house would never have let you. Frankly, I'm amazed you even found it."

"You *shouldn't* have found it," the blue one grumbled, still eyeing them over.

"Yes, that is...true," the red one seconded, finally approaching. "There's a powerful enchantment on our home, one we redoubled just today, after being attacked by that, well...rather comely dragoness that appeared out of the sky."

"And lo and behold, two more strangers," the blue one huffed, glowering. "What brings you here?"

"Ah, first, introductions, yes?" the green one offered, stepping in between the two factions, her hands together peaceably. "I'm Fauna, the one in red is Flora, and the blue one is Merryweather. Pleased to meet you two."

"Ah, I'm Figment, and he's Spyro," Figment said, clearing his throat. "We...well, we aren't from here. How to sum this up best? It's already a bit of a wild story, heh..."

"He's from London," Spyro said, plainly. "I'm from my world. This portal he created brought him to our world, then here, and we're along for the ride."

"Basically," Figment added, chuckling. Flora and Fauna were relaxed, if piqued. Merryweather was one of those two things.

"Well," Flora started, folding her arms. "Welcome. A pleasure to have you two dragons."

"You said, 'we', even though you weren't from Figment's world," Fauna began, moving closer to the fireplace. "But there are only you two. So, who is this other party?"

"That cursed dragoness, I bet," Merryweather grumbled. "The timing is too close. It has to be that, think about it."

"We're not bad guys, promise," Spyro said, imploring. "And neither is Cynder!"

"We know," Flora said, plainly. "The house would never have let you in, if you were."

"Cynder," Merryweather repeated, sourly. "Even her name sounds dangerous!"

"Can you describe her?" Figment asked, starting to move in towards the fireplace as well.

"Dark, winged, horns," Merryweather said, still staring. "Pink belly, pink membranes on the wings. Markings on the muzzle, and ah, fairly large—"

"Hips, yes," Flora interjected, cutting Merryweather a look. Merryweather's hands were up around her bosom, but she rolled her eyes and let them drop back down. "Yes, that would be her. Not as tall as Maleficent, thankfully, but still quite big. Of course, she would never let a new underling outsize her, her ego would never allow it."

"Mellifluous?" Spyro asked, confused.

"Who is Maleficent?"

"A cruel dark fairy, a witch," Fauna sighed, looking to the fire. "She—"

"Caused all of this?" Spyro and Figment both said, unsurprised. They each looked to the other, and grinned some. Spyro got to the next words first:

"I mean, it seemed pretty—"

"Well, yes," Flora said, now the one who wore surprise. "King Stefan and Queen Leah offended her by not inviting her to the christening of their daughter, Aurora. Sixteen years since, she has borne a terrible grudge, and cursed the princess. She would have died of it, but—"

"You softened the curse," Figment finished, nodding. "We know."

Merryweather was now the closest to Figment and Spyro. She had her black wand out, pointing it at them, despite the house's clear judgment.

"So, you met her, then," Merryweather spoke. "You had to have."

"We arrived here to find Cynder and another giant dinosaur, Ripto, gone," Figment started, having existed long enough in London to know what something meant when it was pointed at you like that. "We wanted to know where Cynder was, and this black dragoness appeared at the castle with the thorns, and—"

"Lied to our faces," Spyro added, huffing. "I knew she was bad news! She smelled all wrong!"

Merryweather changed; her wand was already gone, and she was smiling wide.

"I like them," she finally said, nodding just once, and sharply.

Spyro laughed, in turn, wagging slightly.

"She's alright."

"Then, that dragoness, Cynder," Flora wondered, a hand on her cheek. "She's been enchanted, for sure. That dragon you met, that was *absolutely* Maleficent."

"No wonder she didn't tell us so," Spyro growled, put off even more. "What an evil name! That would've been a dead giveaway, right there."

"You said it," Figment agreed. "So, everything bad here in this world is her fault, got it. She must have known we wouldn't find this place, and sent us off on a chase while she adjusted her plans. She must have gotten some information from Cynder, but she seemed legitimately shocked at how huge we were—"

"That's right," Fauna said, remembering. "You said the house *grew* to swallow you both up. I promise, we won't talk the day away, but let me clear something up, before we act. How large are you both, normally?"

"Ah, well," Figment laughed. "That's a lot to—"

"He brought snacks with him when he went through the portal," Spyro said, talking fast, pointing to the bag by the table. "They got affected going through the portal. Different colored candies have different power, but they all got supercharged with energy, and eating a certain one increases your power differently. He got...what, four-hundred..."

"Five hundred feet tall, heh," Spyro chuckled, wagging.

"And I blew up these sweet muscles, and was maybe a hundred, after eating mine."

"But when I tried hard to concentrate, since he's a real dragon, and I was imagined up into reality by my creator, back home in London...I was able to open up a portal from their world to this one, though I couldn't control it, I only meant to go home..."

All three fairies just listened, awestruck.

"...but I made a huge, huge portal, and instead of taking me home, it brought us here, all of us, and I promise, Cynder was kind-hearted when we went in...but going through the larger portal, since we were all huge by then, it...I think it required energy to use it, and so it reduced our sizes, going through, and by the time Spyro and I found Maleficent, I was still big as a building! I guess I was still powerful enough to use some of my imagination, since I was able to imagine pulling your house closer to us, but then it grew to eat us, instead—"

"Alright, stop there, please," Flora said, rubbing her temples lightly.

"Gracious," Fauna murmured, her hand over her mouth. "You...you *commanded* the house towards you, Figment? That..."

"How strong are you, dragon?" Merryweather gawked, openly impressed. "No one should be able to manage that! The house must have swallowed you up out of defense, then decided you were good-hearted enough to stay. Then, clearly, it shrank you both down to fit in it, since we can't have you stuffing it to the rafters with bulk."

"Wow," Figment mooned, for multiple reasons. "I...don't know how strong I am. It's kind of new to me. B-but, we were way bigger, when we arrived, so maybe my power was greater, too."

"Can you make another...portal?" Flora asked.

"If I tried hard, maybe. It might also be linked to how big or strong I am, at the time, too, I'm not sure yet. But, we can't leave here now, our party is split up! We aren't leaving without Cynder, she's our comrade in arms!"

"Exactly," Spyro said, nodding the same way Merryweather had. "No way we're ditching her!"

Now, Merryweather was really grinning.

"So," she said, sniffing. "You want to get back at Maleficent, then?"

"Yes," both dragons snorted, looking to her.

"Then, here's what we do," she replied, her wand back out. Not only was it no longer pointed at them, it was pointed to the bag of candies. She focused, and a brilliant bolt of blue light shot from it, casting the bag in a glow. With that, to both dragons' great shock, it vanished.

"What the," Figment balked. "Wait, no! I, w-we need that!"

Merryweather's smile went from friendly to cocky.

"Then, call for it, Figment."

He blinked, his mouth staying open.

"Ah...come here, bag?"

Right away, a blue flash answered, and the bag was around his shoulders, worn like a back pack, but with the front of the bag against his chest, facing him.

"Whoa!"

"That's right," Merryweather crowed, quite pleased. "I bet you had to lug this thing around before...well, anytime you need it, just call on it! You'll never lose it, this way, no matter where you travel, I've attached it magically to you."

"Hah!" Figment cackled, laughing, doing a little dance in place. "Spyro, look!"

"Awesome!" Spyro chuckled, standing up like a cat on Figment's shoulder. "We should celebrate, and have some candies! Right now! Seriously, I...don't want to be small..."

"Oh, that will revert, when you leave here, don't fret," Fauna giggled, glad to see the two dragons happy. "I imagine you've been through so much, figuring things out as they happen, having to talk through them and understand, while still moving on. We shouldn't keep you, you need to rescue your friend and snap her out of that curse!"

"Right," Figment said, nodding. "Right, we do! Uh...h-how do we break the curse on Cynder, though? Neither of us are...quite like you are, magically..."

"That's why we're coming with you," Merryweather cut in, happy to get to the meat of things at last. "Any help you need, we'll give."

"Yes, consider us your support team," Flora added, readying her wand. "The moment we exit here, you both will grow up to your previous sizes, and with our help...I think...I think we could actually defeat Maleficent, and revert this horrid curse!"

"I suppose it was providence, that we should meet this way, after all," Fauna said, finally smiling in earnest, as she took Figment's feral hand, and shook it thankfully, until Figment was shaking it right back, grinning wide.

"Shoot, we'll take whatever help we can, hehe," Figment cheered, as something sharp and angular-sounding clicked once, just once, behind them all. But, it was enough.

The five inhabitants all spun around to see a small bird there, inside the house, along with them. A raven, it seemed, a male, covered in black feathers and a long yellow beak, with pink bags under each eye. He regarded them coldly, cocking his head, and while the dragons simply watched on in curiosity, the three fairies recoiled in dead horror.

"No!" Merryweather balked. "How could he..."

"The enchantment, how did he get inside? How could he have found us?" Flora wondered, before looking to the two dragons. "Oh, gracious, he followed you! A further deception!"

"I-it wasn't us!" Figment stammered. The raven cawed as it clicked around on the floor with his long talons, almost laughing at them. "We didn't know!"

"You were tricked, Figment," Fauna replied, briskly. "The house let you in, so we know. It shouldn't have let this little devil inside, though! Maleficent must have protected him in advance!"

"She must have made him track us to find the place, on the off chance we succeeded," Spyro added, as the three fairies drew their wands, pointing them at the raven.

"We cannot let Diablo go!" Flora commanded, the fairies approaching the diminutive bird. He seemed unflustered by their threats, just ruffling his dark feathers mockingly at them as he opened his beak some.

"Who?" Figment asked. "That raven?"

"His name is Diablo," Merryweather growled. "He's Maleficent's rotten right hand!"

Figment, of all present, was the first to cry out, because he not only saw what was in the bird's beak as it opened, but understood what it was.

"I'll blast that bird to stone," Merryweather barked, the tip of her wand glowing brighter. "You'll be sorry you broke in when we opened our door, you miserable little creature!"

"Candy," Figment gasped, pointing. "He stole a candy! Look!"

Indeed, a shiny black orb was there, in Diablo's beak. Figment instantly understood that the bird was intelligent enough by a landslide to grasp what a prize it was, just from his smug cawing and fluffed feathers. Was he showing off, or just threatening them back? Before the dragon could speak, Diablo tilted his head up, and gulped it down, his little neck bulging out.

"Was that a black candy?" Spyro asked, as the fairies drew even closer to Diablo.

"Y-yeah! We don't know what that color does!"

Their answer came faster than they wanted, as Diablo swallowed it down, then chirped darkly, caw-laughing brazenly at the three encroaching fairies. For a moment, there was no change at all, surprising even Figment. But, as their wands glowed with magic, and as they got closer, the raven's eyes shut, and an unmistakable grin spread past his beak as its proximity caused him to start rumbling ominously.

Two and two met, and made four, and that made Figment cry out, too late:

"Wait! No, no magic!"

Three bolts of colored light burst from their wands, battering the tiny raven, pushing him back into the cottage wall, just underneath the bottom rim of the window. Diablo cawed and growled, but not in alarm. If anything, he sounded suddenly...overjoyed.

Raw magic poured into the little bird, and it turn, his feathers ruffled out more and more, and more, until he seemed to be actively blowing up like a balloon of sorts. His beak stretched out longer, and larger, growing and surging along with his body, which blew up past two feet, then four. The more they blasted him, the larger and stronger Diablo seemed to become, and at five feet, he rose to it in full, actually a foot taller than any of the fairies.

"W...what foul magic is this!?" Flora gasped, backing away, all three of them stopping, the moment the raven grew big enough for them to understand what had happened. "How?"

"He stole one of the candies, while we were talking!" Figment shouted, to which Diablo smirked and bird-nodded gladly, as it gloating further. "That color...it must absorb power! He's absorbing your magic! Don't blast him again!"

While they listened and lowered their wands, the damage was done; more accurately, it was *ongoing*. As they watched on, the shuddering bird continued to rapidly expand, his lengthening black wings flapping destructively out, getting wider and bigger with each effort, until his 10-foot wingspan began knocking over pictures and trinkets, scattering a mess of bobbles out onto the floor.

"He isn't stopping, Figment!" Spyro gulped, as the bird groaned, shook, then blew up even bigger, still! His beak lowered happily in against his ballooning chest, displacing a raw of parted, fluffy feathers, and it only sank in deeper as his feral chest exploded even higher, still. 9 feet shuddered up to 10, then 11, the raven's head bumping the ceiling, swelling bigger and bigger. 12 feet...14 feet...18 feet...his head fit between two rafters, pinching against it until the beams creaked angrily, as the gigantic raven closed his eyes, clacked his growing beak, quivered deep, then boomed all the way up to 25 feet, flooding the living room with feathered girth!

"W-why isn't he stopping!?" Figment shouted, as he rumbling grew even louder around them, the wall of Diablo's bulging bird-chest pushing the dragons back into the wall, as his avian haunches surged out against the struggling fairies (to Diablo's increasing delight). "He's still growing!"

"The entire house...it's a magic cottage!" Merryweather cried out, drowning down into a sea of ever-swelling black feathers. "He's got to be...ack, soaking it up!"

"AWK, AWK!" Diablo boomed, the laughing raven trembling and rolling his evil eyes up in joy, before booming even larger! His inflating sides pushed the table and chair away, pinning them to the walls as his bulk swelled uncontrollably larger, pushing and heaving flat to the walls, which groaned and started to warp, struggling to contain the huge bird. This proved all the harder, as contact with the magical contours of the interior only fed Diablo even more, even faster!

The chain reaction proved beyond disastrous: the 30-foot bird-hemoth click-clicked his beak, his cruel talons bulging and curving thicker and meaner underneath his bulk, which overfilled the room as he rumbled and burst even *bigger*, too big to fit another inch of himself inside.

"We have to...get him outside, now!" Flora commanded, as a growing feather rubbed at rude angles against her face, getting bigger and bigger as she tried to move it away.

"But we can't use magic!" Merryweather said, muffled, pinned further and harder to the back corner. "He'll...just absorb it and get bigger!"

"He's...getting bigger, already!" Flora retorted.

"Just let him outgrow the place!" Spyro growled, having squeezed himself up and free from where Diablo's bulk was swelling to smother Spyro. Despite being, well, bird-sized, he had managed to sneak a candy out from Spyro's bag, and kept scaling the raven's growing body with one hand, hugging the candy to himself with a musclebound arm.

"I-it's much worse than that," Fauna coughed, from another corner, getting buried under too much raven. "Th-the cottage...will defend itself!"

With that, the house did indeed react, groaning all over. Suddenly, the pressure eased off, as the entire house swelled bigger, its interior surging up and away, letting them all tumble off of Diablo's 50-foot tall feral form. In seconds, Diablo only took up about half of the interior, the cracks of pressure sealing back up, healing, as the house outgrew him entirely. The fairies, Spyro and Figment, however, remained as big as they were before.

"It must only keep us at the size we were when we first entered," Figment mused, dusting

himself off, and collecting the candies that had spilled out from it quickly.

"Yeah," Spyro panted, still hugging the humongous bird's neck on reflex, as he tried to ready the candy he took. "But the bird isn't shrinking any!"

"He's...under Maleficent's spell," Flora gasped, finally free for the moment. The rules won't apply to him!"

Just as Spyro tried to fit the comparatively-oversized candy into his maw, Diablo trembled deep all over again, and his smile returned, great and wide, as he huffed out of his huge beak, trembled all over, and began to blow up again, swelling even bigger, rising like dough to 70 feet, then a rumbling quake, then blowing up to 80 feet, billowing hotly against the interior yet again, buffeting everyone back into the walls a second time, with even greater fervor.

"He'll keep feeding..." Flora continued, already pressing back flat to the wall, "and the bigger the house tries to grow, to avoid him...the bigger he'll grow, to match it!"

This amused the massive raven to no possible end, and he bragged out several blasts of cawing triumph as he wriggled and shook even harder, bulging and ballooning up to 100 feet, filling the interior a second time, his growth even more aggressive now. Perhaps a bigger house was pouring out more magic, to defend itself?

"Gah, stupid," Spyro grouched, trying desperately to stuff the golden candy into his tinier mouth. "If I could just...eat this stupid, awesome...candy, I'd..."

A burst of magic shot out from Merryweather's wand, just before he sank back into the feathers, and instead of Diablo, it struck true, hitting Spyro; he rumbled a bit himself, then to his giddy excitement, blew him up a few feet larger; compared to the candies, it wasn't much, but his mouth grew enough to fit the large candy in, and as much as his body didn't want to swallow something that painfully big, Spyro wanted it much, much more, and made it happen.

As Diablo grew and grew, cackling and clacking victoriously, Spyro began to grow, as well.

"Alright, I...nnngh!"

His own attempt to boast was cut short, as his body changed on him, dramatically. Instead of growing his muscles out, or simply getting bigger, overall, his arms painlessly shook, then clicked out, snapping joints into the same places as a human's, elbows sliding easily back as his arms lengthened into a man's, his haunches pushing out, the angle between them and his forelegs vanishing as they straightened out. His paws pushed out, thinning slightly into fingers, and his shoulders rolled out nicely as he slowly sank down into Diablo's growing feathers, the same as everyone else.

Figment beat and shoved uselessly against the 130-foot bird's belly, his hands slipping against slick feathers, the air getting crushed out of him more and more, all as Diablo simply trembled against him, and ballooned much, much bigger, increasing the pressure.

Diablo's head and beak slammed back up defiantly against the ceiling, the 160-foot giant easily smart enough to know what the stupid little house would do, having picked it right up. Indeed, the house was starting to rumble and swell out yet again, snapping trees and shoving out tons and tons of

uprooted soil across the forest, as it towered higher and higher still, pushing past 200 feet, then 250. For the second time today, the gap between the more narrow points of the two mountain's bases lessened, as the house billowed to fill more and more of it. Inside, the 180-foot tall raven huffed his pleasure out, shaking his head happily, finding himself suddenly only as big as the overturned table, looking around in amusement at the 400-foot house's insides, relishing what was about to come.

"Figment, quick!" Spyro boomed, the 50-foot dragon scrambling back out of the huge bird's forest of feathers, revealing himself to stand on two feet, like a man, his huge muscles remaining, having married quite well to his new humanoid body. He only looked himself over a moment, smiling in awe, before he recalled what he was doing, and turning to the limp form of his friend, now considerably smaller than he was. "Hey, wake up! You need a candy, right away, while we have a second to spare!"

"W-what?" Flora asked, the fairy dragging herself back out from behind Diablo's gigantic back. "Heavens, Spyro, you...you changed!"

"Heh, yup! Gold candy, it's what I could manage to grab, before bird-brain here got too big! Sorry in advance, but I think the only way to..."

Already, the towering raven was rumbling inside, deeper and stronger. Diablo gasped openly, rolling his eyes back in delight, as the feathers fluffed out far once more, and his body started to quake and rattle with the next spurt.

"...we need to break your house! I'm super-sorry!"

Merryweather was already dusting herself off, nodding grimly to Flora. Fauna only managed to emerge from the other side of Diablo a moment, as his rumbling body began to inflate even bigger, right there and then, pushing her back into place—but she had nodded, just before.

"Oh..." Flora moaned, before her resolve ironed back up. "Do it! Do what you must!"

"Thank you!" Spyro said, trying to smile comfortingly, before grabbing Figment's prostrate, smaller body up in his bulky arms. "Okay, come on, Figment! Wake up, buddy! Medicine time! Ah, come on!"

No good. Figment was choked out, though still breathing. Spyro thought fast, and reached for the bag, just as a massive yellow beak darted down, clutching the bag with its closing tips, and yanking so hard that the bag detached completely. Spyro shouted nothing in particular, inarticulate with panic, but as he reached up to take the bag back, a single candy sailed out, and he clutched it tight.

"No time, no time!"

He didn't bother seeing what color he had gotten, he just pushed it into Figment's open mouth with a careful, gigantic thumb. He was still swelling bigger, but not as fast as Diablo; as the candy went into Figment's mouth, and Spyro pinched the smaller dragon's nostrils closed, Figment sleepily squirmed, then gulped it down, and he let go, just as Diablo's rumbling feathery bulk blew up into them both, yet again, a third wave of quaking growth blowing the raven all the way up to a staggering 400 feet! His head bashed up hard into the ceiling, but the awesome avian happily accepted it, unfazed, growing stronger and mightier by the throbbing second as he billowed up to fill the interior a third

time.

"Come on, come on, " Spyro demanded, waiting for the candies to do their job. He felt the power and electric thrill of growth building and compounding as he shook and swelled up to 70 feet, then 90 feet, nearly back to what he had been, outside. His humanoid body was definitely new, but he knew well enough to start pushing with both man-arms against Diablo's incessant growth, straining his still-vast muscles to at least some partial effect.

"AWK!" Diablo cawed, glaring back down over the rising swell of his own body, starting daggers at Spyro, who was just large enough to keep his head up out of the feathers as the bird-bulk shoved him into the wall, which began to crack yet again.

"Oh, sh-shut up!" Spyro shot back, glaring even harder, refusing to be intimidated. "Or I'll cook you, you stupid b-bird!"

Overtly offended, Diablo snorted out his beak, then angrily boomed bigger, still, expanding so violently they the rolling bulge of his chest crept up rapidly, shutting the dragon up as it rolled past his muzzle, pinning it in. Even as Spyro ballooned to 120 feet, bigger than he had been so far, Diablo just blew that away, the growling raven rumbling and shivering, then exploding bigger, and bigger, 450 feet mashing fitfully tight against the house, which openly warped outwards from raw size, cracks forming around the outside as the raven continued to pump himself past 460 feet, then 470!

Yet, as expected, the attacked house started to repair itself, sealing back up as it grew and grew, pumping back into a proper form as it surged to 500 feet, then 600, then 700, intelligent enough to try a much harder push this time, so as to confound its threat. This, in turn, only made Diablo rumble even deeper, the avian crowing and laughing madly as he closed his eyes, and shook like he was in an earthquake, more and more power bulging into his stretching body...

Only to find, as he burst past 500 feet, that a sudden wall of purple scales was competing with him, and meanly. His eyes opened wide as the muzzle and vast, inflating belly of Figment mashed harder and tighter into his own bulk, starting to push it back. Still knocked out, the slumbering dragon grew and grew, replacing more and more of the 700-foot interior with himself, shoving the stunned raven back and back and back. He beat his wings furiously, smacking the unknowing and indifferent Figment as his entire body expanded frantically, shaking and rattling and creaking as his haunches and clawed feet swelled against the walls, too fast to counter, too big to stop.

"AWKAWK! CAWWWW-AWW!"

"Haha!" Spyro laughed, openly vengeful, even as his 150-foot body was crushed in tight between two rumbling, ballooning bellies, feather and scales mashing deeper and tighter still, as Figment snored and inflated even larger than Diablo, shoving the wheezing bird into the far wall, until cracks danced out wider and deeper, too fast to heal.

The entire house swelled again, out in the forests, but not from normal growth. This time, it blew outwards like a great bulging egg, cracks forming in a panic of cracks and loss, the roof blowing up higher, snapping apart, the chimney splitting and breaking off, before 700 feet of Figment shook, trembled, and boomed hugely, blasting up to 800 feet, forcing the entire poor cottage to wobble and strain, crack, strain, split, strain! A whole segment blew away, a vast purple bulge of stretching scales bursting free, before another blew out on the other side, the opening forcing a huge bulge of black

feathers out into the open, before—

BOOOOOOOOM!

The entire cottage, enlarged as it had been, still blew apart, crashing and shattering into a flurry of destruction, sending plaster and brick and iron and wood and fairies and dragon everywhere at once, everything and everyone landing hard into the surprised woods below, leaving only the monumentally big, towering, bloated, still-sleeping Figment there, laying where the house had been, over 800 feet tall, his massive scaly belly swelling up and down as he slept.

As Flora, Fauna and Merryweather all found one another, down in the snapped trees and ruins, they looked up to see Diablo taking flight, somehow able to get his 600-foot body to surge up into the skies, his flapping wings shaking everything below with a great volley of rushing air. The bag remained snagged, a mere speck against his vast talons, very much his prize and prisoner...leaving the fairies, Spyro and Figment back down below, in the valley.

"OH, SO *HE* CAN FLY," Spyro fumed with a deeper voice, dusting himself off with his new man-hands. "SURE, WHY NOT! HE SEEMED PLENTY-HEAVY, WHEN HE WAS PRESSING AGAINST US ALL!"

He rose to a stand, looming massive and proud over the three fairies, now rendered mere specks against the man-dragon's grandeur, which only increased as Spyro sighed, then rumbled anew, and looked himself over in confusion.

"WHAT..."

That was about all Spyro could manage, before his massive, muscular form rippled up even bigger; his man-feet and vast clawed toes billowed out wider, longer, covering the upturned soil as he surged higher and higher.

"...IN THE... WORLD..."

He snorted happily, unable to hide his sudden glee, as his muscles tensed and shook and boomed out with him, tightening warmly; while they didn't outpace him this time, they certainly did keep up, staying proportionately as big and hulking as they had been, in his previous feral state. His man-chest twitched receptively, two swollen-out, scale-plated pecs bulging into firm, flexing mounds of mass, as his thick biceps stretched and peaked against his royal-violet hide. His thighs flared larger, his hips broadening, as he wobbled and pumped up, up, clearing 200 feet, then grunting and smiling, all teeth, as he stretched up past 210 feet...220 feet. The fairies all backed away in wide-eyed wonderment as Spyro whimpered blissfully, closed his eyes, wobbled again, then blew up with a last, audible swell, clearing 250 feet, wherein he finally exhaled and shivered off the lingering waves of energized growth.

"IS...T-THIS..."

He looked himself over, smiling even wider, then doing a fairly earthshaking hop in place, sending the fairies into a slight tumble below, by his house-sized feet.

"...IS AWESOME! HAHA! LOOK AT ME, NOW!"

"Ooh," Fauna sighed, taking to flight, in order to reach up to Spyro's towering muzzle. "It seems the growth you lost going inside our home returned, on top of your new spurt! Those candies of Figment's truly are astounding!"

"OH, SHOOT, FIGMENT," Spyro snorted, blushing at his behavior. He turned to see the far larger dragon there, still knocked out, stretched and splayed dumbly across the unwilling bed of the forests. "HEY, FIGMENT! BUDDY, YOU AWAKE! COME ON, UP YOU GO!"

"It seems he's out quite cold," Flora murmured, flying around Figment's gargantuan body, which began to shake and tremble in his sleep, before starting to swell up even larger! "Goodness!"

"Oh, great," Merryweather moaned, getting further away. "The previous size is going back to him, too!"

Spyro chose to hold onto Figment, rather than bother with fleeing, as his pal swelled bigger and bigger, snapping the rim of the bed of canopy around his scaly arms and bulging belly and legs and feet. Compared to his new massive size, the extra 250 from before only seemed a trifle, adding roughly another fourth of his size to what was there seconds ago, pushing the mountainous dragon all the way to 1,050 feet, all of which was awkwardly horizontal.

"CAN YOU WAKE HIM UP?" Spyro asked the three fairies, as they floated around his head, almost the same way that Sparx did. "I'M NOWHERE NEAR BIG ENOUGH TO LIFT HIM, EVEN WITH ALL *THIS* GOING ON."

He demonstrably flexed his bulging arm, unable to help doing so just a little bit.

"We can try," Flora answered, readying her wand. "But we are losing time! Diablo will go back to Maleficent, he's already possessed of a healthy head start! And he has the bag—"

"WHAT?" Spyro boomed, not meaning to. Now, the panic they felt was his own. "SO, CALL IT BACK, THEN! QUICK! YOU CAST THAT CALL SPELL, RIGHT?"

Even Merryweather suddenly seemed abashed, which was a sight for Spyro.

"No. No, it's been attached to Figment. Only he can call it back."

Despite the sheer size and power Spyro had, his face was clearly draining of color.

"THEN I'M GOING. JUST POINT ME WHERE."

"Follow Diablo," Flora said, sternly. "At that huge size, he cannot be missed! We shall wake Figment...then find a friend, as fast as possible. He is a noble ally!"

"RIGHT, THAT'S GOOD! I ONLY NEED ONE MORE THING FROM YOU, PLEASE!"

The three women looked confused, until Spyro explained...

Diablo sailed through the skies like a vast shadow on the sun, wings spread over 1,100 feet

apart as he smiled and flapped, loving the way the skies themselves moved with his merest efforts. He smiled even wider as he caught sight of the kingdom below, seeing its capitol stretching out beyond the base of the great castle. He came to a heavy, thooming landing, vast yellow feet thudding down over entire houses and streets of the seemingly abandoned city. Yet, as the impact of his arrival shook entire streets and alleys, rattling windows and shaking trees, its true occupants all stumbled out into the open, very much in a panic.

A horde of countless bumbling creatures all spilled forth from houses and inns and taverns, from sewers and fountains, all of them halting and duly gawking at what towered over them. Hundreds of small, goblinessque cronies, goons and toadies unified (more or less) on the cobblestone walks, all of them staring in stupefied shock at Diablo's looming enormity. The bird noticed, and gave a giddy, fluff-puffing shudder of approval, as the black dragoness reared up over the walls of the city, easily scaling it at her size.

"Well!" she hummed, her green eyes slitting in great, great interest at her monstrous pet. "Whatever it was that enabled those moronic dragons to grow so titanic...it would seem has been passed onto you, my beloved Diablo!"

"AWWWWWK!"

The singular squawk shook the city, and she alone understood why the immense avian smiled even wider after, relishing the raw power he held.

"Then, pray, tell," Maleficent rumbled smoothly, her voice dark smoke and silk, "how, exactly, did such a monumental gift befall you?"

The colossal raven puffed smugly, lifting a vast leg and foot over the many rooftops and chimneys and walkways and bridges between the upper and lower city levels—he towered over it all, with no trouble, as his huge talon tapped the streets, the many underlings parting fearfully as a small leather bang slid down, down onto it. As he lifted his talon, Maleficent thudded along to intercept it, sniffing curiously.

"It...smells...sweet," she hissed, pulling back in poorly-restrained disgust. She reared back up to dominance, then shorted a plume of dark steam and undid the top flap with a huge claw, revealing the dozens of multicolored candies therein. "Hmm."

"CAW!"

"Oh?" the dark dragoness exclaimed, her glowing eyes wider now. "Really? The black ones absorb magic...and you were at their home...haha! I see! My clever Diablo, well-played! You've swollen so beautifully, at that! Meaning, these other colors?"

Diablo shook his head, then cocked his beak.

"No idea, then? How very, very interesting! Which shall I...oh...oh, you..."

The oversized black claw picked and prodded, until a single dark red candy tumbled out.

"Bloody-red. Rose red, even. How amusing. Yes...yes, you shall be first..."

The minions all mumbled and watched as Maleficent dipped her large muzzle low, and flicked out a forked tongue, snatching the tiny candy up with a muted, lustful greed. She gulped, then shook her muzzle, her glowing green nostrils wrinkling unpleasantly.

"Too sweet, I fear," she sighed, playing off her reaction in front of her many underlings, who all stared on in fascination. She too, waited. And waited.

"...Nothing, is it?" she coolly hissed, snorting out a burst of smoke. "How disappointing..."

As if to console his master, the towering Diablo leaned in, surprisingly carefully, and offered the great dragoness his even-greater beak, in a show of comfort.

"Hmph," she growled, shaking her head and horns. "No, my pet...there are others yet to try..."

She brought a large clawed hand up to Diablo's looming beak, to guide it back and refute the affection; yet, the moment she touched him, it happened. Her eyes went saucer-wide as the dragon shook and rumbled, her touch live and electric against Diablo's beak, as a vast floodgate of raw energy opened to her, and with a confused caw, the monstrously huge raven rumbled as well, then...lurched lower to the ground, shrinking somewhat.

The avian blinked in bafflement, then cried out as once again, he slipped down smaller, and smaller, all his hard-stolen size flowing rapidly away...into Maleficent.

"Ahhh," she grunted, trembling all over, her draconic body suddenly blooming out larger. Her vast clawed feet tensed, toes scraping the stonework below, before billowing even bigger. 30 feet swelled loudly, expanding and heaving, bulging and bursting to 40 feet, in just one moment. Her spiked tail crept back like a growing weed, snaking past the city center, the tip pushing between homes and shops as she shivered in delight, rolling her swelling shoulders, her neck thickening and sprouting out higher, and higher. "AH!"

Diablo clicked his beak unhappily, feeling another 10 feet slip away, then another, shrinking from 550 feet down to 500, all as Maleficent blew up from 50 feet to 100, in one hard bulge of growth, forcing her belly to blow up larger, then blow the size through her rumbling limbs and into her growing head and snout, her horns curling out meaner and longer, yet.

"Y...yes," she seethed, in dark rapture, before Diablo worriedly trembled and slipped down to 400 feet, forcing another hundred usurped feet directly into the dragon, who roared as she violently boomed even *bigger!* 200 feet tall now, her scaly bulk surged and creaked over the city center, the black sides blowing into the high public fountain, cracking, then snapping it as her girth billowed unstopably bigger against it. Her feet swelled wider apart, lurching and enlarging into the path of her onlooking minions, who looked to one another anxiously, then began to scatter back as the uncaring dragoness tilted her head back and blew a great streak of green flame, shaking and quaking and moaning, before booming up to 300 feet!

As he neared 400 feet, Diablo finally panicked enough to pull back, breaking the contact between them, and leaving Maleficent nearly his own size, roughly 400 feet to 400 feet. The dragon shuddered and snapped her huge jaws happily, opening her eyes once again.

"Hah," she huffed, digging her huge, terrible claws into the crackling streets. "Haha! How...utterly...amazing! To think, such magic existed...hah...I must...have more..."

She thudded a huge paw down, approaching Diablo. The loyal Raven saw this, and stood back to full attention, staying dutifully put, but wearing a fairly unhappy grimace throughout. Maleficent saw the expression, then halted, blinked, and shook her head. When her eyes opened again, the crazed zeal had...well, it hadn't gone, not at all. But, it had diminished.

"No," she said, slowly, snorting. "No, my pet, that size...is yours. You earned it."

Even the mighty Diablo gulped, then finally relaxed, nodding through his lingering apprehension. Maleficent instead turned around, his thick, bulging tail whipping slowly around in thought. The minions far below the both of them snapped to in terror as she laughed suddenly, lowering her now-enormous muzzle over them all.

"Gather that bag, and follow," she said, suddenly cold and blunt, her tone far removed from that which was reserved for the raven. "Quickly, you imbeciles! At last, I know just what to do with that strange new toy of mine..."

With her turned and thudding heavily away, Diablo finally let out a feral sigh, looking in blatant relief to the skies above. Still loyal to the last, the humongous avian stomped along, his vast feet narrowly missing entire neighborhoods, as the 400-foot beast boom-stepped along, following the horde of tiny goons as they swarmed the streets of the stolen city.

At the ruins of her old castle, not at all far from the outer rims of the kingdom, the huge dragoness stopped. She brought a massive claw down, scooped it into the hook of a gigantic handle to a gigantic trap door, and at this new size, practically tore it off its hinges. That it was just that easy to manage had Maleficent humming with approval, as she looked into the pit, and growled eagerly.

"Awaken, you feeble thing," she commanded, as something stirred loudly, down below, making the ruins of her old castle wobble the slightest bit. "I've found a fitting use for you. And spare me any thanks...this much will suffice as payment for my generosity..."

Down in the darkness below the castle, Ripto stirred, groggy and disoriented.

"Wait," the dinosaur grumbled, blinking against whatever meager light that made it in around Maleficent's vast bulk. "Lemme loose, you..."

Before he could fully wake, Maleficent's massive paw pushed down into the pit, thumping heavy and hard against Ripto's billowed-out body.

"Hey...HEY! Wait, what're you..."

Right away, at her very touch, the protesting dinosaur's inflated sides decreased, deflating down, down towards Ripto's center, as he dwindled down from 500 feet to 470...430...400...in inverted gulps of size, he found himself decreasing, that fullness and power bleeding off into Maleficent. His attempts at moving away were pointless, as he nearly filled the entirety of the massive holding arena he had been shoved into earlier. And as he shrank, again, Maleficent grew, and grew, and grew.

"Yes," she hissed, slitting her eyes into glowing green threads of desire, as the stolen hundred feet of mass pumped into her, instead, billowing her up and up like a great ebony bladder, her scales screaming in joy as they pulled over-tight against more and more and more and more growth. "I can take...from anyone! H-how...divine!"

Her hand grew against more and more of Ripto, making it harder and harder for the panicking reptile to flee into any corners, as her palm consumed every inch of scales it could, her swelling claws digging harder into what remaining bulk he had. The last shreds of lights slipped and thinned to despair as Maleficent's increasingly huge wrist swelled and swelled, filling the opening entirely, bulging around it as she relentlessly expanded up above.

"S...stop..."

Ripto's former bravado stumbled in his maw, falling into a stunted whining, as the ground above him rumbled and sagged lower, then lower, still, loosing dirt down as he shriveled inward again, and again. 200 feet proved too much to keep, then 180...160...140...while Maleficent's scaly girth hurriedly and hungrily rocketed larger, stronger.

"More," she boomed, pressing her growing palm in even tighter, gasping, as she rumbled and billowed loudly up to 590 feet...630 feet...her spiny back arched up higher, peeking beyond the crumbling walls of her former abode. Her sides mashed in against the remnants of once-strong pillars, snapping, splitting, then shoving them off in surrendering segments as her sheer mass bullied through. "MORE!"

Still, the dragoness took, and took, blowing up past 700 feet, then 740. The inner shell of her castle strained and complained as she laughed, letting her stretching skin bulge and press against odd corners and through broken stone stairwells. Her minions all inched back every time Maleficent roared and swelled even higher, blowing up past 750 feet. Even the towering Diablo watched on in shock, his beak open, the gigantic raven forced to look up and up, every bit the same as them.

Ripto's vision was choked out into darkness once again, but now his senses were failing. As the energy bled out of his 70-foot body, which wobbled and shrank down to 50, he felt his consciousness fading towards a much-needed blackout, and as he withered down into a meager 2 feet, he was finally allowed it. Partly, he had less than anything worthwhile left to give, but the more pressing factor was that, simply put, Maleficent's hand was far, far too big for him. A palm big enough to rip an entire tower up from the ground pulled at the opening it had wedged itself into from all the growth and, finding itself stuck, pulled with *real* force.

The ground surrounding the pit doorway uprooted, exploding rock and soil all about, as Maleficent inspected her oversized hand, then snarled and blew out a terrible empire of flame, just from laughing. Her laugh could incinerate the skies, and she nearly did so as the 900-foot behemoth bellowed and basked in her own heaviness, her raw *size*.

"Better," she cooed, her voice alone a quaking blast of sound. "Much better."

All underlings present began to rub at their necks absently, many getting stuck that way, from staring at such demanding angles, just to see all of their master. A monster-sized paw shifted as she lifted her street-sized feet, slamming them down with impossible weight, all in order to turn to her tiny

subjects, and smile wickedly from on high.

"Fetch my new ward, now," she commanded, ice blowing in on her words. "She has work to do, and right away. No...no, you're too small to go fast. Diablo!"

Diablo shook off the sight of his better looming 900 feet up from the ground, the castle bowing out and starting to tumble into dust around her. He cawed obediently, then thudded his way back towards town. When he returned, not one moment later, Cynder was in tow, following behind the much larger bird. Even at 15 feet in size, no taller than the average rooftop of the average home, the underlings still parted for her, clearly scared enough to bother as she passed.

She came to a stop, still humanoid, still tall and ample, her eyes glazed into dulled mirrors.

"My Queen," Cynder said, flatly. She looked up at the colossus Maleficent had blown up into, a living hill of scales and teeth and bulk. "What is your bidding?"

"The fairies you failed to slay," the massive dragoness rumbled, "they recruited the aide of a Prince, the son of the neighboring kingdom's ruler. He was put to a quest, in what they think was secret contract, just yesterday. This silly little man is named Phillip, and you will see to it that his quest to awaken Princess Aurora...fails. Now, before you depart for the woods in which he thinks he can sneak closer, you will do one further thing."

"Yes?" Cynder asked, unblinking, unmoving.

Maleficent nodded down to the underling that was lugging the bag of candies, and the goon quickly hauled it closer.

"Do you know what these different colors mean?" she asked. "You traveled with those simpletons, you would have seen."

"The blue one, my Queen, is growth. Great growth. The gold is for some growth, and a body like a human's, such as the one I achieved prior. Green is for some growth, and fantastic strength, and muscles that can crush any foe. Pink is to expand like a great blimp. The other two, my Queen, I have not seen in play."

"Then, we know all of them, now," Maleficent snarled, quite pleased with herself. "Red is to take the size of others for one's self...and black, as my dear pet found, absorbs power. Well, then...give her a blue one. Now."

The panicked little mote of a minion nodded frantically, his tiny hand shaking as he managed to fish a blue candy out of the bag. Cynder blankly turned, leaned down, and plucked the blue candy up in two big finger-claws, popping it into her mouth and swallowing.

Maleficent watched Cynder intently, making sure she wasn't outmatched from this blue candy, as Cynder began to rumble in deep, and start to swell up bigger, and bigger.

"Perhaps I might allow her to enjoy it," Maleficent hummed, thinking the gesture over, as Cynder blew calmly up taller, higher, her hips swelling out in unison with her healthy chest, proportionately bulging out as she rose up over the ruined castle ruins, blowing up from 15 feet to 20

feet...30 feet...50 feet...Her slight size increase from the last world seemed to give her a higher base to start off, and in seconds her rumbling scales stretched tighter as she burst up to 80 feet in one thick burst, her shoulders rigid, her eyes unblinking still, even as her tail sprouted longer down behind her, her clawed toes swelling larger, her thighs bulging warmly.

"Hmm," Maleficent mused, cocking her humongous head slowly. "Effective, if plain. Which one would I choose next, I wonder?"

As she thought it over, Cynder continued to expand heavily, her bust rumbling and booming forth ahead of her, her rump booming in kind, as her head rose up past Maleficent's looming haunches, now over 130 feet tall, and still growing bigger...and bigger...and bigger...