

7.

Figment had his guesses as to how much size he was being taxed for, during travel, but by this point he understood that landmarks were the only way to know the end results, for sure. Crashing into water, and only water, he found he might have to put a pause on any further math. Plus, he wasn't the greatest swimmer, and when you're still (presumably) many miles tall, you do tend to sink *quick*.

A moment's relief came as Figment's huge toes tapped the ocean floor, displacing monstrous clouds of dust; that relief fell flatter than his foot when he looked up, and saw the ceiling of water, up above. He was nearly tall enough to stand in the deeper reaches—*nearly*. Imagination-born or not, the dragon was real enough to drown, and panic came flooding in, before the water could.

Eyes wide, Figment tried to launch his bulk up higher, but his tonnage was so fantastically great that each leap raised him by a relative inch, debatably. The fear was up to about his belly, now, and rising fast. Many thoughts offered themselves, but few were solutions.

Think, think, think

He cycled his arms about, slowly. Even with the buoyancy of so much water, it took effort to move limbs that massive.

Can't swim, too heavy...can't leapt, same reason, can't float...get walking! Go! Go! Find a shallow spot!

The jury was back in record time, on that one. Figment willed one ponderous paw forward, tunneling through the water with a surreal, slow-motion smoothness, before mutely slamming down again, scattering countless fish and whales.

...One.

Two followed, then *three* after. Still, the going was too slow, too slow to help.

I-imagine...I can breathe underwater! I can breathe underwater!

Despite his desperation, reality said otherwise.

I could open a portal—but that would take in water, too. Would it work? No! Spyro and Cynder are still here, I would be leaving them. Couldn't I open the same portal and get them back, after? Gah, no, no landmarks...I wouldn't know what to imagine! Argh!

Either the depths were playing tricks of the light, or Figment's vision was starting to blur. Either way, the panic was up to his neck.

I...I can float! I can float on water, no problem at all! I imagine I could float, like a balloon!

This time, remarkably, something happened. Gradually, Figment crept higher up through the water, his toes leaving the cracked floor. The topside of the waters were close, so very close, and his muzzle stretched pleadingly for it, for precious air, willing himself higher, faster.

I'm VERY light! Very light, indeed, for my size! I-it's true!

Enough of Figment's thinking, rational brain seemed to interfere, that there was no further change, so even though his suffering lungs begged for help, and his every newfound muscle strained from the reflexive tension, he still sluggishly ascended. As his vision started to tumble into a full-on blackout, he felt it: a rush of cold air grazed his muzzle as it emerged, then his chest!

His muzzle swung wide apart as he gasped, then coughed, and coughed hard. As it happens, a creature thousands and thousands of feet tall gasping sounded an awful lot like thunder. A flash of light followed after, up above, and Figment opened his eyes to a roiling storm overhead, as he caught his breath and flared his nostrils. He nearly sagged back underwater, and had to force his unhappy legs to kick for whatever little support they might offer. All told, Figment was floating on the water's surface—*barely*. But it wasn't death, so he was willing to meet things halfway.

"GUH," he wheezed, spitting out a rush of water that playfully leapt into his opened maw. "W...WHERE...SPYRO!? CYNDER!?"

The angry crack of thunder boomed back, rain hammering down in nasty sheets, pelting his head as he looked about. Water, water was *indeed* everywhere. No islands, no sign of landfall, no coastlines or mountains to be seen. At his presumably monstrous size, that was an especially poor omen. He brought his bulky arms up to paddle with, then realized he had no idea which direction to even try.

Just pick, and go. Land is somewhere.

Unless this is a world of water.

An even more terrible thought came crashing in, like a wave of its own: Can Spyro or Cynder swim!?

"SPYRO!" he bellowed, hoping the sheer size of his voice might do something. "CYNDER! WHERE ARE YOU TWO? HEY! IT'S FIGMENT! WH—"

A high wave smacked his face, making him splutter. For every cry he made, the sea roared back, an incensed demon driven mad by his refusal to die. In a blink, he had gone from too big, to too small, swallowed despite his great size, tossed back for every push forward, as unthinkable volumes battled to knock him over. Concerns over his own safety snapped and splintered, pinwheeling back to his comrades, then back to him. A much, much greater wave charged, from the North, and Figment swallowed such worries along with a huge gulp of air; he closed his eyes and headbutted down into it, crashing through. The next caught him harder, making him spin back into the cold water, circling up again into the hammering rain.

Get above it

Wave after wave crowded Figment, pummeling him, driving him back under.

Bigger! Get bigger! You're too short!

Despite his every intention otherwise, the cold math was indisputable. Even a float could be dragged under. Wasting no further time, Figment finally felt around for his bag, his hands scouring his huge abs, not understanding what it was for a moment, before something much worse arrived on the tracks:

It wasn't there. The bag wasn't there!

No. No! No! No, no no

"WHERE—"

The next wave slapped him sideways, disorienting. Thunder screamed overhead.

"B...BAG, RET—"

Having chosen then to shout, Figment took on an lung full of water from a staggering tsunami and reeled back, until blackness returned. This time, he figured he might as well hear what it had to say.

The forests shifted, then went silent again. Flecks of rainwater from the howling storm shook free, dappling down over and trailing along a stretch of polished black scales. The light tickling trickle proved more than enough to cause a stirring, as a large black rock unfurled itself and stretched out tight. The feral dragon yawned wide, roughly the size of a pony, and covered in sleek ebony; he shook the disturbance off, sat up in a cat-like stance, and snuffled the air curiously, green eyes wide. Right away, eight fin-like slats of varying sizes bobbed up, perking out to attention, like scaly ears.

Something was off. Had the storm blown something inland?

He huffed the strangely sweet smell out, letting it go, then padded on all fours towards its source, his wings tucked against his back. Whatever it was, it seemed close enough that flying wasn't really worth the bother. Sure enough, as he crested a large series of mossy rocks and vertical crags masquerading as a hilltop, he saw exactly what had caused the smell—there was no mistaking it, now that it was in sight.

A great, sweet-scented globe sat alone along the coastline, down below, beneath the steely clouds and curving mountaintops beyond. The beach on which the massive things had washed up seemed undisturbed otherwise, meaning...*finders keepers*.

The dragon snorted, then scoured the vista over, just to double-check, before grinning and clambering down effortlessly, curving his back as he landed on smaller rocks, lengthening out to thud down onto the wider ones. Every few leaps, his fins would sail back out wide, as if he were a child, constantly ready to be caught doing something bad. Or fun.

As he thumped down onto the beach head, the real scope of the globe revealed itself, and even the dragon's brash soul was momentarily tested. It looked smaller from up above, but as he walked closer, the thing itself loomed impossibly high up. It could have filled a good portion of one of the human settlements further off, and it reached into the sky at its apex. All told, it had to have been just over a thousand, maybe even 1,100 feet high, and wide.

The great mass seemed stuck well-enough in the sand, to where it wasn't going to roll over and crush him on approach, so he edged that much nearer, until he was sniffing it directly. It smelled like a dozen different fruits all at once, both fascinating and somewhat overwhelming, to the point where the dragon slit his nostrils in tight.

He stuck his pink tongue out at length, testing, lashing it out as he experimentally licked the vast thing's under-curves. His tongue slipped back in to report, and the dragon's green eyes went impossibly wide. A great shudder rattled along his spine, his long black claws digging into the sand as he huffed, then snorted hard. He tensed every muscle, unable to help it, then tingled and bulged out, creeping a few stray, electric inches out in size; the sand inched slightly away as he felt himself shake and rise up a tiny bit, and when it passed, he let out a confused, but highly satisfied huff.

What...was that? It felt like flexing his muscles, without ever releasing! The warmth, the pressure, it had...blown him up? Was he...was he really a little big *bigger*, suddenly? How!?

He glanced back up at the massive orb, covered by a swirl of gold over dark, dark green, almost the same way clouds did when he flew over the seas. He glanced himself over again, then stepped around a bit—he must have been heavier, the way his new prints deepened in the sand!

His morning now well-booked, the beast turned every available mental gear on how to get as much of this into his mouth as possible, in as little a time as possible. He knew the area, other dragons would be scouting the beach for fish in short order, and competition over this thing was even less desirable than over food. It was the *only* thing less-so. For sure, that one dim-witted Gronckle would be by, before long, looking to bum off his catches. That dragon was the only outcast loner to want friends, and with him being the only other loner around, it often equaled aggravation aplenty, since even at his nicest, his shared portions of fish and fruits hardly ever filled the big idiot up. He was always hungry, for food and attention. So, understandably, he went to work particularly fast.

A good headbutt proved hardly good enough, as the force impact redoubled, then blew him clear back off all four feet. He snorted out a small cloud of sand, glowered, then scrambled upright and came at the thing with claws out. Each slash might as well have been made in bedrock, leaving shallow scratches here and there, until he slashed his way into a small, cross-hatched patch on the otherwise undisturbed whole. He sniffed his claws, tongue poking out, then began circling about in aggravation.

How? How could anyone possibly crack something this big?

He nearly committed to climbing the high cliff overlooking the beach, and dive-bombing it directly...before realizing it would probably crack his skull. Frustration mounted, the teased dragon circling around and around, until at last, he couldn't stand it anymore, and blasted a burst of flame out into it, angrily punishing it for not already being devoured. The flame smacked against the underside of the monster-orb, and when the smoke cleared, a patch was leaking loose, the sugary mass sloughing down the curve in a semi-liquid state. He clamped his mouth shut in shock as the smoke cleared, and the crawl of molten candy crept nearer, and nearer, before hardening again just shy of his reach.

Still, it had been enough.

His thick black tail whipped into a frenzied dance as he rumbled and struck up a wider stance, drawing in deep. One, two, three, four blasts shot out of his maw as it opened, peppering the same spot, and this time a good deal more melted down his way. Wasting no time, he flapped his wings into flight,

and made just enough height to start lapping away at the melted feast. A great flood of flavors nearly assaulted him, making the back and sides of his hard-working tongue cry out in shock as he gulped more and more down. There, in mid-flight, the sensation struck again, making him shudder so hard that his wings failed, and he tumbled unharmed down into the beach.

There was no concern over the crash landing, as the ebony dragon curled in tight on himself, panting and shaking, then rumbling deep and blowing up even bigger—much, *much* bigger. Sand spread out against his balled-up form as pockets of bulk began to push out, striations and sinews imposing themselves upon his frame as they clumped and bulged into differing territories. Four unified feral legs separated into factions of their own as the hind pair elongated into thighs and calves, as the top two angled out into a set of toned black arms. Shoulders ballooned into definition, connecting to emerging pectorals that pulled his shiny scales out in a swell of raw muscle, making him hiss and writhe in place.

The more he wriggled, the more he embedded his growing body in the beach, kicking and lashing up waves of sand with every thrash of his thickening tail. He held the last hiss in, trying not to grunt it out as his neck pushed up, thickening yet stretching at the same time, the flat width of his head capping it as his fins shuddered and slapped about.

In seconds, the dragon had buried himself down into the sand, even as he grew larger, higher, surging from the size of a horse up to the size of a great oak, then bigger still, easily blowing up past 50 feet as he snorted and trembled on. With a last, hefty rumbling, that dark mass erupted violently, blowing up in a geyser-spray of sand, ballooning wider and wider over the section of beach head, rocketing up past 100 feet...200 feet...300!

At roughly three hundred and thirty feet in size, he unfurled, letting new-grown muscle clusters breathe, and stood fully upright, wobbling. The sheer weight of his man-like heels and scaly soles kept sinking lower into the beach, leaving his footing unsure as he tried to adjust.

He...he had really changed. It was really real!

A feral grunt escaped his maw, and he brought up massive hands to cover his mouth, then feel down along his massive, bulky neck, getting used to it. His throat had rattled like thunder! He felt his bulging chest twitch, eager for his focus, and he thumped his huge palms warmly on each one, getting a lovely drum-beat from them as they flexed happily. He felt so different...he felt so *good!*

As close a thing as possible to a man's laugh boomed out as his massive black tail swished and bashed down on the sand. All this, from *one* mouthful!

He still had to look up to see all of the mountainous candy, but it was certainly looking much more manageable to him, now. He tensed his huge back muscles, feeling the new manner in which his heavy wings moved, then stomped up to the ball, hugging into it with a thrilling amount of power. Still, for all his squeezing, it only managed to produce a few thin cracks around the small crater, the dent in which his flames had succeeded. Unable to break the bigger thing, he instead planted his muzzle into the crater, and welled up yet again. His pectorals bulged flatter against its curves as he dug his horse-sized toes into the sand, then blew a much, much greater torrent of fire into the small opening, making much more of the rim melt into a sweet liquid silt.

He blew until enough melted, to where he could start gulping down greater amounts, then blew again to melt more, slowly eroding the underside of the massive candy; all throughout, he felt the great

rumbling return, a hundred-fold, and his delight grew too big to contain, even as he began to stretch and shake and balloon even bigger, and bigger, yet!

By the time about a fifth of the monstrous candy had been consumed, the dragon was already growing to match the size of what remained, his physique billowing out to frightening dimensions as he hugged into more and more of it. His massive fins had grown bigger than a viking ship, the longest ones pushing up past the topside of the great orb as he pumped beyond a thousand feet, then shuddered and gulped more down, gritting his teeth as he spread wider and wider, taller and taller. His humanoid feet dug and clawed as they parted and parted, his river-wide tail slamming in glee behind his rump, as he hugged the entire candy up, up off the beach, flexing unthinkable biceps and surging forearms, his scaly pectorals becoming so vast and over-thick that he began to lean the huge candy in against them, as ever-increasing, warm padding, as he ate and ate.

For one brief moment, his ear-fins swiveled, and with just one mean growl, he sent the single other dragon approaching the beach off into a scramble of fear. The black dragon's peripheral vision had given him enough to work with—it was just a Terrible Terror, as the humans called them. To a human, that title might have stuck, but to him, it was just funny; Terrors were the runts of the dragon world, and the idea that one had the nerve to get even that close to his precious treat was just laughable. He might have actually bothered to, were it not for his current meal retrieving his full attention.

Twelve hundred feet wavered and tensed, ballooning loudly, blowing past 1,300 feet...1,400 feet...his toes alone grew larger than entire village houses, his hands big enough to hold several entire barns at once! Molten candy tickled past his muzzle as he stubbornly pushed it in deeper, finally large enough to gouge out whole bites, switching his enjoyment of slick and liquid to crunchy and blocky. Either way was just fine with him.

The best meal of his life, the best moment of his life—was then interrupted, at last.

His vast green eyes fluttered open in confusion, as the remaining third of the mighty candy suddenly escaped, flying up into the skies without any help from him. Rather, thinking on it, it felt removed, pulled away. *Taken.*

"OH, NO," a great, rolling explosion of sound boomed, rattling the beach, the cliff, the waters, even the black dragon. "DON'T TELL ME..."

The stolen candy hovered higher, high enough that he could see two humongous hands clutching on either side of it, hoisting it up, revealing a musclebound dragoness looming high overhead, considerably taller than even he was. She stood in the surf, her ankles still submerged, and all told, she must have towered at about a full two miles in size, holding the massive candy like a mere ball, just underneath a monumentally massive pair of breasts. For a moment, the male dragon had no idea what to be more in awe of...but that sorted itself out surprisingly fast, as his gaping mouth closed into a snarl.

"GREAT," Cynder huffed, from on high, finally seeing what was behind the candy. "OF COURSE, SOMEONE FOUND IT. WHAT ARE THESE EVEN DOING, LAYING AROUND? FIGMENT!?"

As she called out, only the black dragon below answered, roaring back up at her, clearly flustered and upset. Cynder looked back to him, frowning a brow slightly.

"EXCUSE ME!?"

Though this was clearly a feral dragon, the language of tone and body position still remained universal. The insult had been hurled, and she did not at all care for it.

"THIS IS NOT FOR YOU, OKAY?" she blast-spoke, nearly knocking the smaller giant back, making him go wide-eyed as he stumbled in place. "THIS BELONGS TO A FRIEND, AND I NEED TO FIND HIM, AND WHAT NOBODY NEEDS RIGHT NOW IS ANYONE CHOWING DOWN ON THESE, AND BECOMING A GIANT-SIZED PROBL...WAIT, HOW'D YOU EVEN..."

She was more easily able to notice it, as the male barked and bellowed up at her: he was all gums. So...how had he...

"YOU'RE...TOOTHLESS?" she muttered, cocking a formerly-furrowed brow. "THEN..."

In reply, a white-hot fireball blasted forth, and she blocked it at the last moment with the candy, letting it sizzle into it a moment.

"HUH...OKAY, PRETTY CLEVER. BUT STILL! THIS IS *NOT* YOURS!"

Toothless shook with anger, and as Cynder watched, to her mounting dismay, that very shaking proved a bit too fruitful. The ebony male's trembling built, then blew him up even larger, his bulk stretching audibly tighter as he winced and snorted and grew, pushing up past 1,500 feet...1,600 feet...1,800 feet. His back brawn loomed up over his head a moment as his neck exploded thicker, his chest throbbing out, out, out ahead of him as his shoulders boomed wider.

"ARGH, STOP THAT!" Cynder ordered, though Toothless was too busy not doing what she was commanding to do as she commanded. Part of her duly sympathized.

She staggered back, more of her huge, bulky thighs vanishing into the ocean, putting defensive distance between her and the now-2,100-foot tall dragon. His rear had blown up well-beyond the high cliff side, his tail rubbing along its face, then lifting up over the cliff, and slamming all its growing weight down over the grass and stone beyond. Where seconds ago he had maybe gone up to her shin, he now crept towards her knees, and sinking back into the ocean, the height difference really put him up to her waist. At nearly a fourth of her colossal size, Toothless finally stopped growing, and let out a happy streak of steam as he chuckled and shivered the rest out. His bulk was every bit as spectacular as her own, and sure, truth be told...she noticed. She cleared her throat, willing even the ghost of a chance that she might be blushing away, banishing it.

"THAT...IS EXACTLY WHY!" she boomed, sighing wearily. "CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE OFFICIALLY A COMPLICATION. AH, FIGMENT WAS RIGHT, EVERY WORLD, WE GET INTO SOME NEW WRINKLE...HE MUST HAVE LOST THESE CANDIES WHEN WE HIT THE WATERS, BACK AT *HEY*, STOP THAT!"

Toothless proved big and powerful enough to have waded right out into the same surf, demanding the candy back with a series of swipes and deep growls. Naturally, Cynder hoisted the ball further up, going so far as to twist away with it, letting her hips and monstrous chest swing out. Naturally, Toothless blushed, leaning back the tiniest bit at their imposition.

"NO, NO, COME ON, NOW. SO...DO YOU SPEAK?"

The dragon glowered, torn between her figure and her thievery. He snorted, licked his muzzle over, then folded his massive, amazing arms, forcing his pecs to shove even bigger and tighter over the forearms. His eight fins darted back, and he was clearly putting his mental faculties in how to get that candy back, rather than answer her—which was answer, enough.

"FINE, YOU DON'T. THIS MUST BE A MUCH MORE ANCIENT REALM."

A new thought intruded, and Cynder smiled wide.

"OKAY, FRIEND...TELL YOU WHAT. I'M LOOKING FOR TWO OTHER VERY, VERY, *VERY* BIG DRAGONS, HOPEFULLY NEARBY. HAVE YOU SEEN TWO VERY BIG DRAGONS? BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN ME, EVEN?"

Toothless remained glaring, like some huge, upset cat, scheming on ad infinitum.

"IF YOU HELP ME FIND THEM...I'LL GIVE THIS BACK TO YOU."

She mock-offered the huge candy, and that did everything. Toothless' eyes had thinned to predatory slits in a show of power, but the moment she made her proposition, they widened back into surprisingly cute black ovals, big and curious and friendly.

He looked his hand over, making a testing fist a few times, then worked at extending just one finger out into a point, all so he could point at the ball. He then looked to make sure he was pointing at himself correctly, before looking back up to her.

"THAT'S RIGHT, I'LL GIVE THIS BACK TO YOU, *IF* YOU HELP ME."

Cynder smiled, and this time, Toothless did the same.

"OKAY, WE'RE AGREED! GOOD, GOOD. SEE...I'M TOO BIG TO GET ONTO LAND EASILY. UNDERSTAND?"

Toothless looked Cynder over, raising his brows in a rather flattering way. He nodded.

"HEH...ER, I NEED YOUR HELP IN LOOKING AROUND, INLAND! I CAN ONLY SEE SO FAR, FROM THE OCEAN. AT THEIR SIZES, I SHOULD HAVE SEEN THEM FROM MILES OFF, SO THEY MIGHT BE PRETTY FAR REMOVED FROM ME. COULD YOU PLEASE HEAD INLAND AND LOOK FOR THEM? YOU SHOULDN'T NEED TO GO TOO FAR. IF YOU FIND ONE OR EVEN TWO MALE DRAGONS, BOTH PURPLE, BOTH HORNED, COULD YOU BRING THEM BACK HERE? DO THAT, AND I PROMISE, YOU'LL GET ALL OF THIS DELICIOUS CANDY FOR YOUR VERY OWN!"

Toothless seemed to think it over, looking towards the mountains and fog, then turning back and nodding with a grin. It was fairly astonishing how easily he had gone from menacing to adorable. He stomped back up onto the beach, shaking everything expect Cynder as he simply stepped up over the mighty cliff, and thudded heavily up onto the landscape beyond it.

Once on the mainland itself, Toothless stood all the way up to just underneath Cynder's looming chest. He turned to her, wagged his monstrous tail, and grinned again.

"THANK YOU, SO MUCH! I'LL BE HERE!" she replied, waving to him.

All she could really do was watch him trundle a bit awkwardly off into the fog, though it took time for enough of it to swallow up past his impressive back muscles and shoulder blades. She felt her cheeks, then realized they were indeed still hot. Hopefully he hadn't been smiling on account of that, because where Spyro and Figment had more of a boyish charm, this dragon was considerably more...well...*rugged*. *Confident*. Whatever it was, it was enough to force her attention away.

She pulled her thoughts back on tight reigns, and refocused.

She hadn't been fooling: if she stood about two miles, then Spyro should have been maybe seven, and Figment...goodness, who knows? With a portal as big as a country being opened, who knew how much size that had cost him?

She looked down at the gold-green candy in between her hands, and sighed. After wandering around in the ocean, having thankfully landed near enough to land to not drown, and having found no looming bodies taking up the horizon, Cynder had all but hit a wall on how to proceed. Whether Figment was okay and had (or had recalled) the bag, it didn't really matter. Any candies that had been removed from it would have remained removed, as only the bag could be called back, meaning only whatever was inside it would return.

"I HOPE YOU'RE BOTH OKAY," she muttered, her voice still huge enough to send greater waves over the beachfront.

Trees, forests, rocks, roads, hills—everything was beneath Toothless now. He gladly alternated between looking out over the fog-clad landscape as best he could, and looking directly down as he stormed along, leaving massive footprints in his wake. The only things beyond him were the taller mountain sides, and the iron clouds from before. They looked more ready to rain again, making his wings twitch the tiniest bit when the first raindrop plunked down onto his head. He wasn't even sure he felt it as the rain started up, until the misting turned into a full drizzle, prompting him to bring his huge wings up as a kind of makeshift umbrella.

That huge female looked just like he was now...she must have eaten a the same thing he had been working on. It was a game in and of itself, simply trying to guess how much bigger and stronger the rest of the candy might end up making him, and it proved more than able to fend off any boredom as he thoomed over an entire forest, then another, the grade of the land slowly rising higher beyond the ocean level.

The only thing that stole his thoughts was, to be fair, the one thing that was capable: another mountainous orb of candy.

All of his fins darted up just ahead of his sights, as he noticed it looming between a valley formed by several towering rock spires, as though the mountain range had offered it a throne. While the deal was hardly off, Toothless did change his plans: the female had said nothing about him enjoying any *other* candies he came upon, after all! He could eat this entire one, outgrow her, and then get his

original candy back, and get even bigger! *How perfect!*

His tongue was already out, before Toothless closed his mouth, checked the area over cautiously, then thudded down his side of the hill, sliding towards the valley. As he neared, however, something appeared, on the other side of the candy. It sailed up over the opposing end from him, revealing itself to be a huge, green, scaly arm and hand, which slapped down greedily over its topside, before ballooning larger, and larger. Another hand slammed down, and a gigantic head and horns crested over, making Toothless blink...then snort sourly.

The Terrible Terror. That little runt had already gotten to it before him!

Toothless considered himself a magnanimous enough sort, when it came to other dragons; he had only meant to scare the little one off, earlier, nothing more. Now, however, he was fully ready to fight. Unfortunately, so was it—and, the closer he got, the more capable it appeared to be growing.

Where Toothless was roughly 2,300 feet, the Terrible Terror was less-so, looking about as big as the entire candy, at about 1,000...but that was changing, and fast. From the side he had approached, Toothless saw a full candy, blue and black-swirled...but, on better sight, more than half of it had already been eaten. He gulped at the idea, then gulped worse as he saw the Terror seeing him...and grinning.

Even the mighty black dragon skidded to a slow, just shy of the remainder of the candy, as the Terror gave off a throaty laugh of sorts, then closed her eyes and billowed even bigger, pulsing out in loud, groaning bursts of growth. It had to have been another female, given the tone of the rumbling laugh, and Toothless began to back his way along the slope he had just descended, growling here and there, but clearly retreating some, as the Terror trembled and ballooned twice her size, in one mean, bloating blast, her feral form surging over the remainder of the candy, cracking and snapping it with her weight as she roared and swelled past 2,500 feet, pumping her up to nearly half a mile in size!

Her brown horns curled out as she closed her bulbous yellow eyes with thick lids; her quaking claws crashed down onto the forestry hugging the valley slopes, trenching through them as though they were all thin moss. She wasn't changing, wasn't becoming humanesque, like with the other dragoness. She remained feral, which only was to her benefit as her body length forced her head and thickening neck out over Toothless, as she kept growing, and growing, and growing, and growing, on and on.

Why? Why was she getting so much bigger than him? Why wasn't she changing? She had eaten more candy, but...it was a different color. Did that matter? It must have!

Even the great mountains of Berk began to struggle to contain the Terror as she shook and snorted and inflated even bigger, sponging up size ravenously, bloating up past a stunning three thousand feet, putting Toothless evermore in her shadow. Her huge hind legs crowded against her belly as they mashed into the valley walls, smashing rocks and trees as they swelled higher and higher.

If Toothless happened to have any spare size in escrow, he was requesting it, but none came. Instead, the towering Terror became worthier and worthier of its moniker, as she snarled and lowered her head, thunder-bulging up massively yet again, lurching and rumbling up to a whopping 3,500 feet. As if to underscore the whole affair, she forced her huge eyes open, enough to stare Toothless down as she opened her gigantic jaws, snatched the rest of the candy up, and gulped it smugly down.

That's right...she wasn't even done eating! Run, stupid!

The normally humorous mini-squawk of the average Terrible Terror was usurped by a rolling bellow of dominance, nearly blowing Toothless back, as the Terror shuddered even harder, its emerald skin pulling tighter, tighter, *tighter* across a sudden explosion of mass. Where Toothless had been moments ago backing carefully away, he now scrambled back, narrowly missing the wall of bursting scales bashing down into the valley floor, swelling ceaselessly larger against it. The Terror's horned head pushed angrily up, up through the mists, rising up higher along the mountain side, even as her body surged lower and lower, wider and wider, filling the entire valley just as Toothless leapt back onto the higher mountain path.

At a full mile tall, the roaring female thumped a massive hand up over the path, stopping Toothless' attempt to escape, purposefully letting the humongous digits rest there, as it continued to swell bigger and wider still. Daunted, but hardly paralyzed, Toothless stepped back on his massive heels, then charged, and vaulted over the hand, slamming destructively down on the other side, and hammering along the flattened forests as he fled.

The roar of anger behind him seemed to fill the world as the sounds of the Terror's growing body echoed after. Toothless unfurled both wings and tried to make a liftoff, but it was nearly impossible in this state, at this size, so he tucked them back in and darted left, between two hills. He forced himself through, dragging enormous scaly biceps and abs along a grinding wall of flora, squeezing out the other end—only for the Terror to scabble up the hills themselves, stopping only to close her eyes and rumble-BOOM even *bigger*, yet again.

Toothless tried to bellow out an apology back, but at 1.5 miles in size, she was able to catch up very, very easily. Over three-and-a-half times his size, she seemed either too big to hear it, or too big to care. Just as she cornered Toothless over the edge of the landscape, overlooking the ocean, and just as she reared her still-growing, 2-mile body up to smash him flat, it happened.

That sound. That awful sound was back!

Toothless grunted, then shook his head, his fins ducking back, trying to avoid the noise as it rose up from down the coastline. The sound he made sure to stay away from...he hadn't heard it this far out before! This should have been a safe region! It *was* a safe region!

He nearly clawed up at his own ear-fins, growling unhappily, as the titanic Terror stopped her stance, and shook her head in much the same fashion. She gutter-boomed and whipped her neck about, as if shaking off some unwanted intrusion, even going so far as to ignore her continuous rumbling growth. She pushed higher and wider over Toothless, blowing all the way up to 2.5 miles, when Toothless bit his tongue slightly, then moaned and leapt clear off the edge, plunging willfully down into the waters below.

The Terrible Terror finally stopped shaking her head and went still, unnaturally so. She blinked, then lumbered off heavily over the terrain, her footfall quaking the territories so hard that even the viking settlements further away felt the tremors. As he walked along, she continued to swell and balloon to more and more absurd sizes, the candy still working through her huge body; yet, so savored none of it, instead glumly traveling to the West, where another massive candy rested, partially submerged in a lake out past the forests and plains.

Never much of a swimmer, Toothless panicked and thrashed in the water, before eventually realizing that he was so big, so tall, that he could easily walk up out of it. If anything, he was lucky: there had been just deep enough waters off of the bay, that he had landed without slamming into the floor at high speed. Still, he lingered a moment, looking up through the topside as he held his breath. There was no sign of the Terror anywhere, and he couldn't hear the unpleasant pitch of the call, either. He knew what that noise meant, for dragons. It was one in a laundry list of reasons why he always stayed alone, out in the wild. Not only was solitude much easier, but safer, too.

When he peeked up out of the ocean, he found no signs of attack nor summons, and he cautiously made his way up onto land again, when he managed to find a big enough, stable-enough set of rocky steps with which to make the brief climb. Small as the two females had made him feel, Toothless took a moment to see just how much even-smaller everything else was, and it did perk things up some for him.

He looked back to the North shore, just to check: no sign of the first female, the darker, prettier one. He'd gone far enough away, by this point. Where had the Terror gotten to? Could even a dragon as big as she had blown up still be called successfully? Was the Red Death *that* powerful?

A series of earthshaking growls and grunts tugged his ear fins, and he looked to the South, in time to see the Terror shoving away at...another candy! She had grown even larger, still, impossibly, and at just over three miles in size, was able to shove and roll the colossal orb along the crumbling landscape, nudging it forward as she walked it by.

Any relief Toothless felt at no longer being a target was quickly replaced by something much worse—he understood where the Terror was taking it. Specifically, he understood *who* was calling for it as her dinner.

He gulped and gumped fearfully at his own lip, his ear-fins whipping back. The Red Death must have been growing hungrier these days, to roar out a call this far...and if a dragon that big ate the whole candy...oh, it nearly broke Toothless' poor mind.

He...he could go back, and warn the nicer dragoness...but that would take too long! The Terror would surely push that food all the way back to the Red Death's lair, by then...

Toothless' fins perked up tall, as he decided. He was going to make sure it never got that candy, if that was what it took. The Red Death wouldn't get it...if *he* got it first! His courage up and secured, Toothless set to following a good deal behind, the massive, half-mile tall dragon still doing what he felt was his best to creep along, undetected. He fidgeted here and there as he went along, shaking his head, trying to get the water out of his ears, before glumly resigning to it, and tailing the Terror back to the lair. The rain came and went as he traveled, his wings back up for cover, ignoring the faint rattle of far-off thunder in the skies. An even nastier storm was on its way, for sure.

Why neither Toothless nor the bulky dragoness had seen her gigantic friends became clearer, the closer Toothless got to the Red Death's lair. Mile after mile of treacherous spires and crumbling rock faces and low cloud cleared, eventually, until Toothless rounded a mountain, and saw for himself.

Out in the far peninsula, opposite his coast, were the volcanic mountain ranges of the wastelands. Toothless had gone through considerable efforts to remove himself as much as possible

from the foul nest, and seeing it again did him no comfort. What helped even less, however, was the sight of two utterly monstrous, towering dragons, both of the violet persuasion, standing on either side of the volcano that made up the nest's core. One was almost taller than the entire structure itself, surely five, maybe even six miles tall! The lower clouds crept anxiously past as he stood still, unblinking, dull-eyed and mute. He seemed a bit too...cute, to really be a bruiser, but anything that big would have sufficed as a guard, to be fair. The other was smaller, perhaps about four miles tall, still bigger than the female he had met several hours ago. Both of them were swollen with muscle, much like with Toothless, and for a moment, the beast felt outclassed, once again. It only took a moment for Toothless to put it all together.

More subjects. The Red Death called them, too.

...This was bad.

He finally noticed another candy, resting on the opening of the volcano, up top. It was a mingling marriage of blue and pink, and was a bit too big to fit through; instead, as the smoke from the volcano crept and snaked up around it and the rim, Toothless realized it was being gradually melted down, either to fit, or to eat, outright.

*This was **very** bad!*

There simply was no way Toothless could take down one dragon that size, with that much power and bulk, let alone two. Yet, as he watched on, the massive Terrible Terror trundled heavily down, exiting the labyrinth of mountains and spires, emerging on the flatter reaches of the series of small islands, leading up to the edge of the peninsula. In short order, she would roll the candy over the gap, and right into the volcano, into the heart of the nest. Then, it would all be over.

No time to go back. No way of flying. How could he alert his new friend, back up North?

There wasn't time to strategize. Action was needed, smart or not. He crawled back from where he came for a moment, and thought fast.

Called dragons wouldn't notice most things, unless it was important to their goals. So.

Taking the risk, Toothless looked skyward, opened his maw wide, and blasted out fireball after fireball, in quick succession. Against the rainy clouds up high, they stood out like gigantic firework blasts. He had aimed high enough, that it should have been visible from the Northern shores. It would have to do.

Cynder had only meant to send Toothless out on a quick search recon, not a day-long epic.

"ARE THEY REALLY THAT FAR AWAY, THEY CAN'T HAVE BEEN SPOTTED BY NOW?" she asked the clouds, forcing herself to continue waiting on, in the ocean waters. In all their time traveling together (however long it had actually added up to), she had acclimated to landing on dry, warm land; wading out in cold waters had, by this point, proven cold enough to drop even her body temperature.

Something had to have gone wrong, she thought, idly swatting at a nearby fly. It returned in

moments, and the towering dragoness grumbled and tried again to shoo it off with a sky-high wave. *It'd be suicide just to go back out into the ocean, and search. none of us are **that** big. I'd have better luck with—ugh, come on!"*

A third time, she tried to wave the bug off, before realizing a problem with the situation: *what fly could ever be big enough for her to see, when she was over ten thousand feet tall?*

She focused her sight as the undisturbed speck circled about, then alighted on her vast muzzle bridge, flapping its minuscule wings quietly.

"AH," Cynder started, blinking comparably immense eyelids. "GET OFF, SHOO. HEY, YOU! WHAT, IS THIS ANOTHER...DRAGON?"

Her eyes adjusted a little more, then a little more, still...but being that enormous, there was just no way to properly tell what the thing was. She brought up her hand high into the sky, then lowered it again, unwilling to strike.

"FINE, FINE. PROBABLY TOO BIG FOR YOU TO EVEN UNDESTAND I'M TALKING."

Far below, on the vast open field of Cynder's muzzle, the Gronckle rested, snuggling into a big spike ball of contentment. At last, a dragon that could keep him a little company! The small-ear-finned, big-bodied boulder of a dragon sighed and stretched, his comparatively-tiny wings flopping flat to his nub-studded backside, his mace-like club of a tail wagging happily below it. His stomach growled something awful, but he ignored it, and continued resting warmly.

Not feeling any bites or negative reactions from the interloper, the colossal Cynder committed to her giving up on chasing it off, and instead looked back to the mainland—just in time to see a bright flash of light among the clouds. One followed another, after another, until she understood that they formed a very-intentional pattern.

"WHAT ANGLE ARE THOSE...AH, THE EAST!"

Rising to a looming stand, Cynder strolled around in the ocean, hugging the periphery of the land, seeing the last few bursts of fire coming from farther off down the coast. She beamed, then started thudding her way towards them.

Be alive, she hoped, willing reality itself, the way Figment sometimes could. *Just be alive!*

A minute or two seemed safe enough for sneak-purposes, and Night Furies (as he had heard them be called) such as himself were naturally stealthy, meaning Toothless was able to come up behind the inattentive Terror, slipping down into the waters around the islands she hopped so heavily between. Keeping his head submerged, and using his legs to paddle, he did a decent-enough job of floating in the water nearby, actually managing to gradually outpace her some. If he could intercept the rolling candy, and use its momentum, he could maybe run off with it at top speed, and hide in the rim of the mountain range...

Two islands left...now, one. From in the water, he watched, until it was now or never.

As the titanic Terror lugged the candy over the gap between land masses, and let it crash and roll onto the mainland of the wastes, he made his move. Toothless burst up out of the water, wings flared out, bulky arms outstretched for the candy, which...rose again into the air, lifted just out of his reach, by incredibly big purple fingers. He roared in shock and panic as he instead collided with the larger Terror bashing into her head at high speed, before bouncing off her and tumbling into the ground on the mainland with a spectacular thud. With no rolling ball to put his momentum into, he simply skidded into a heap of muscle and wings.

The Terrible Terror lay there on the nearest island, knocked out, as the even-bigger of the two violet dragons held the orb high, turned to face the volcano, and slammed both palms together, smashing the candy into great, splintering chunks. The other giant dragon just stared out into nothing, indifferent, even as Toothless reared his impressive bulk up and dusted it off. The biggest of the pair was leaning down and setting piece after piece onto the terrain, as a small line of feral dragons filed out to gather them up, one by one, and bring them back inside.

The candy up top that had plugged the volcano must have been attempt number one to break it down with heat, the same way he had with his precious candy...only it must have been taking too long, even with the magma flowing around the interior floor. He already knew what was down below, in the nest's pit, waiting for the food to break down and be consumed.

The best he could hope for was stalling and disrupting the chain, so Toothless reared back and spat out a volley of fireballs, all colliding near the entrance in a series of explosions that sent the controlled masses into a panic.

If none of them can get inside just yet with the food...maybe that can buy enough WHOA

Now, the bigger dragons were on the move, and their destination was very-much indeed him. Toothless yelped out the last blast, which shot up and impacted on Figment's barrel chest with little to no harm done. The next chapter of the Toothless Saga began with a singular pivot on gargantuan feet, and a hard dash into the surrounding mountain range. Mercifully, the taller reaches of stone rose more than high enough to obscure his tremendous bulk as he fled, and the larger dragons dumbly took to a charge and tore off after him.

Toothless wound as best as that much muscle could through a mess of formations, spires and outcroppings, banging his wide head on a lower one, blowing the bridge it formed between mountains into ancient dust as he passed. A hand bigger than his entire torso shot down from overhead, over the entire range, crashing down into a massive cloud of debris—through which Toothless scrambled, going from all fours to just two. Seeing the smoke, however, he welled up and began blasting absolutely every inch of mountain and spire that he could see, blowing up a volume of such smoldering confusion that Spyro and Figment could only stare down at the cloud he created, poking absently and rummaging through it.

Though smaller, Toothless was quickly reminded that he was still considerably-large, as he stumbled out of the mountains for a moment, then dove into the neighboring crop, already rounding that end of the peninsula. The bigger dragons kept focused on the smoke, before the larger one turned quickly to spot him, having figured it out faster than Toothless might have liked.

Figment motioned to Spyro, then over to the end of that side of the range, the one he had just entered. Spyro nodded, then thoomed to cover that end, while Figment quickly stormed over to the

opposing end, effectively trapping him in his hiding spot.

It had been bad that there was a dragon that big, against him. Worse, still, he was smart.

With only one more realistic card to play, Toothless blasted the spot closest to Spyro, back down the inside of the range, and the moment he kicked up enough smoke, he turned and saw Figment motioning for Spyro to get ready to catch him on exit. Toothless grinned, then made his move: he clawed quickly up the side of the nearest mountain, facing inland, and before the diverted dragons could tell what was what, he vaulted out towards the volcano, arms outstretched. If he could just get to the steadily-melting candy at the top—

BLAM

A blast from Spyro connected, and it was dead-on. It sailed out through the clearing smoke, striking Toothless in the side, and blowing him off course. He banged so hard into the turf that it smashed into a full-on landing crater, leaving him reeling for a moment too long.

"SPYRO!"

Who was Spyro? He was the one who was hurt.

"FIGMENT!"

Back from the North, Cynder's titanic form strode, kicking up enormous tides as she parted her share of the ocean with her massive hips, then ankles, rising up with the elevating floor. She waved both dragons down, approaching the entire peninsula, before looking past the tall volcano and candy, and seeing Toothless, laying in an impact crater, still smoking from the blast to his sides.

As she saw everything, that small dot on her muzzle, the Gronckle, sniffled the air, then woke back up, bright-eyed. Wasting no time, he stretched, then took to flight, too small to be easily noticed as he flew into the opening at the volcano's base, entering the nest.

"W-WHAT," she muttered, before looking up at her two other comrades. Both Spyro and Figment simply stared at her, uncaring, unmoved at her presence. She looked back to Toothless, who was quickly dragging his claw in the dirt, forming lines, connecting them. It was a bit rudimentary, granted, but Cynder quickly understood: he was making pictographs, giant-sized ones, in the dirt. *Drawings.*

There was just time enough in all the commotion, that she observed the images. There was the volcano, a basic upside-down 'V', with a monster's crudely drawn head emerging, roaring out sound waves...unhappy circle-dragons were swarming near the sounds, messy tangled lines indicating confusion and chaos. She looked up to Figment and Spyro, still watching her, devoid of emotion, showing no autonomy to speak of, and that was plenty. Every loose piece clicked into place, sharply.

Saying nothing else, Cynder brought her hands up to her reptilian ear holes. The instant after she did, indeed, a horrible sound screeched out, shaking the land, disrupting the air. Spyro and Figment shook their heads a moment, then turned and began lumbering from the mountain range surrounding the land, inward, clearly advancing on her. She kept her ears covered as she backed away, until the

sound faded off from the volcano. The order had been given, though, and as the two larger dragons neared, claws out, Cynder began her plea:

"WAIT, SPYRO, FIGMENT," she stammered, searching for the words, even though she knew full-well from her own awful experiences that they wouldn't land. "LISTEN TO WHAT I'M SAYING. I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU. I, UH...I...LONDON IS UNDERWATER! HUMANS BREATHE DIRT! I HEARD THAT PORTALS ARE ACTUALLY JUST, UH, THOUSANDS OF FIREFLIES! BECAUSE, YOU KNOW...FIREFLIES, THEY'RE ONLY GOOD FOR THAT SORT OF THING!"

Spyro and Figment kept advancing, unmoved by her provocations. She stepped further back into the ocean, doubling down:

"GUH, I-I...I FLY, BY WILLING THE WORLD DOWN! AIR IS TOO HEAVY TO LIFT! SCIENCE IS JUST UNSUBSTANTIATED GUESSWORK!"

Figment let off a snort, but otherwise kept encroaching, and she had no idea whether or not that was enough to infer some sort of slippage, some crack in the armor. She hoped, sure, but—

Suddenly, the pink-blue candy caught in the vent sank, then sank again, drawing their collective attention. Within, the increasingly loud sounds of ravenous eating began to echo out, messy and rude and frantic, and for a moment, Toothless stopped trying to get up from the crater, and simply despaired.

Cynder's more-understandable confusion was shattered, however, when the entire half-softened candy slipped down from the rim, then simply seemed to vanish inside. There was no landing, no crash or thud. Instead, a great and terrible rumbling issued forth, as though the whole thing might erupt...only what blew up wasn't lava—it was a leathery bulge of skin, brownish, billowing and inflating up bigger and bigger, until the rim of the vent started to crack around its growing bulk.

Now, all present parties shared a single shock; Cynder, being closest, dipped down as low as she could, and squinted into the opening of the base of the nest.

"WHAT THE..."

Inside, the lone Gronckle was expanding, at a terrifying clip, his huge body booming in every direction. Much like Ripto before, the nubby, mace-tailed dragon was growing more and more into a great, stretchy balloon, as she caught his tongue licking pink paste off his his oversized chin, a giddy grin on his muzzle.

Cynder went cross-eyed a moment, trying to refocus on her muzzle. Sure enough it was again vacant.

"IS THAT...THE DRAGON THAT WAS...HE WAS ON ME, THE *ENTIRE* TIME?"

Spyro, Figment and Toothless all watched, stupefied, as the Gronckle's rump and tail bulged higher up out of the cracking volcano, Cynder spotting the ant-sized dragons as they obeyed the prior bellow from within, and all hurriedly moved chunk after chunk of crushed blue-black candy into the volcano. It was a clear race between sides, as the happy Gronckle hung from the vent, trembling and blowing up even bigger, in effect driving his broadening bulk down, down, closer to the great hole in the center of the nest. Given that the volcano itself had to have been about two thousand feet tall, with a

narrow enough vent up top that the candy had been slightly too big for it, meaning that they growing Gronckle must have already blown up past a thousand feet, given how close he was bulging towards the nest's pit. Given that it was an ominous pit in a nest, and the peons were marching candy over and dropping it into it, she didn't need to be told that there was a Queen, or where it was.

"I THINK," Cynder began, her eyes brightening as she watched from outside, "I THINK HE'S...ABOUT TO PLUG IT UP! YES!"

Indeed, as Spyro and Figment sent Cynder and the rising Toothless into a new chase, and as the dragons inside the volcano dropped the last of the candy fragments into the pit, the 1,800-foot behemoth of a Gronckle rumbled and snorted cutely, before b-b-BOOMing even larger, forcing his head and thick neck and upper belly to mash tight into the rim of the pit, effectively sealing it off. Still, as the tinier dragon servants all scattered in fear, and as the Gronckle hiccuped and swelled tightly, filling every crackling inch of the entire volcanic nest, and even as Figment and Spyro thudded after the fleeing Toothless and Cynder, the entire landscape suddenly rattled, then stopped.

The volcano, the whole structure itself, cracked and swelled out, the fractures splitting and separating, as like an eggshell unable to contain a growing host. Whole segments of ancient rock shot loose, sliding off, replaced by great ballooning bursts of stretchy scales, until the breaking mass blew out even further, rumbling and quaking, then suddenly blowing apart in a detonation of destructive release.

Tephra and smoke and rubble and soot all sprayed everywhere, bouncing off Cynder's bosom and Toothless' ample rear and torso, rocks thumping against the unconscious Terrible Terror nearby. The nest was no more, substituted unwillingly with a vast, blimped-out, stretchy mass of Gronckle, which wagged its ball-tail in euphoric satisfaction, having finally found a meal it could fully enjoy.

He must have been a full mile in width, already, and was only inflating bigger and bigger, rounder and fuller and happier, his big deep eyes lidding low as he huffed, let his huge feet dangle against his expanding sides, and blew up bigger...and bigger...

"HE...HE DID IT," Cynder laughed, as Spyro and Figment both stopped their chase, and groggily put hands to heads, blinking their way out of their stupor.

"UGH," Spyro groaned, sticking his tongue out. "MY HEAD'S KILLING ME..."

"YOU AND I, BOTH," Figment muttered, rubbing his huge temples as he towered over the landmass. "I'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS PHENOMENA WITH HUMANS FROM BOOKS, BUT...BLAIRION NEVER EXPLAINED WHY THEY DO THIS TO THEMSELVES..."

"SPYRO! FIGMENT!"

Cynder cheered outright, uncharacteristically joyful, pouncing the two startled males in a tight hug. They looked to one another, then back to her, and shut right up, sidestepping their own bafflement long enough to hug her back. Spyro started:

"SO, WHAT—"

"WELCOME TO THE CONTROL CLUB," Cynder sighed, knowingly. "NOT A GOOD TIME,

I KNOW."

Figment's smile sank under the weight of the meaning.

"WHO DID IT?" Spyro asked, point-blank.

Toothless stepped in, and both Spyro and Figment lurched back heavily, shaking the mountains around them. The black dragon only came up to about Spyro's lower calves, and forget Figment; this meant that he seemed more like a puppy suddenly scampering up for the first time, to unknowing owners—only the owner, it turned out, was definitely Cynder.

Toothless motioned up at the two of them, then at Cynder, then at himself, smiling.

"AH, YES, YOU DID FINE THEM, TOOTHLESS, THANK YOU!"

"TOOTHLESS?" Figment pondered.

"HOW MUCH DID WE MISS?" Spyro wondered, as Cynder smiled warmly and retrieved the remaining green-gold candy from her massive cleavage, handing it down to Toothless, who more than readily snatched it back, stumbling back from its size and weight.

"HEY, NOW, WAIT," Figment gently fussed, only for Cynder to hold up a quieting hand.

"I KNOW, BUT HE FOUND YOU TWO. I WAS TOO BIG TO GO STOMPING AROUND THE MAINLAND, SO I TOOK HIM ON AS A SCOUT. I PROMISED A REWARD, SO THAT'S WHAT HE GETS. BESIDES, SPYRO, YOU CAN JUST... YOU KNOW. AFTER."

Spyro beamed, at last, his boyish charm returning.

"OOH! YEAH, OKAY, LET HIM HAVE IT, THEN!"

They all turned at the sound of a great straining of hide swelled too large to ignore, just as the Gronckle rumble-billowed even larger, surging out nearer to them, now over 6 miles tall. Even Figment stepped back, agog.

"GOOD LORD, HE'S STILL GROWING!?"

"HE ATE A CANDY OVER A THOUSAND FEET IN SIZE, SO YEAH. WHEN WE ALL CAME HERE, WE HIT WATER IN THE MIDDLE OF A STORM. I CAN ONLY ASSUME SOME SUPERSIZED CANDIES GOT OUT OF THE BAG, AND DRIFTED INLAND. I MEAN, EVEN THE NEST QUEEN, DOWN THERE, ATE A BLUE-BLACK ONE...SO, THANKFULLY, THERE WAS NO CHANCE FOR IT TO ABSORB ANY ELEMENTS, AND GROW."

Figment went pale, stunned long enough at the idea to where he stayed put, simply letting the Gronckle continue to grow and grow, blowing up into his side as the others retreated.

"THE CANDIES...OH, NO! HEAVENS, THE B-BAG!"

He looked down. They all did. Well, Toothless and Cynder looked up. Indeed, the bag was again

gone, removed from his titanic person.

"IT'S OKAY, FIG, YOU CAN JUST CALL IT BACK, REMEMBER?" Spyro started, before the Gronckle trembled and hiccuped again, doubling his size frantically, shoving everyone back more and more. His sides swelled over the surrounding mountains as he sighed in delight, letting himself burst up past 20 miles, then 30, on and on, bigger and rounder, bloating more and more disproportionately vast over the landscape.

Before Figment could respond, however, a solitary, violent THUD tore through the earth beneath them, heaving them all into a topple. It echoed across the peninsula, the neighboring islands, and the ocean itself, leaving everyone dumbfounded in ominous silence.

"W...WHAT," Figment stammered, just as the ground shook upwards into them once more, even more aggressively, cracks starting to spread and cluster and grow, webbing underneath them, throughout the entirety of the terrain.

Then, at last, came the rumbling, one so much worse than any they had ever heard or felt before. It only worsened as the rain began to *plunk* and patter down, overhead, then swelled into a full-on, windswept storm. Thunder clapped and snarled through the cloud banks, even as the unconcerned Gronckle fell asleep, his bulging body puffing ever-up, partially pushing through the very thunderheads surrounding them.

At once intersection, the cracks split, then heaved up high, separating the group as the entire peninsula snapped apart. Instead of the waters rushing in to fill the gaps an utterly immense army of dark gray scales emerged, plowing and parting the stone and earth. The mountains snapped apart and crumbled, littering down over another mound of scales, then another, and as the dragons all slid off into the sea, a monstrous peak blew up through the ground, pushing defiantly into the skies. Through the anarchy and rubble they could all see their own share of a towering mass, which divided into two humongous factions, revealing mountainous, jagged rows of teeth between. An absolutely immense tongue lashed higher and higher as the opening increased, and a set of jaws big enough to swallow and entire island rose free, followed by three glowing eyes on either side.

A head. A head so big it towered over them all, even Spyro, even the slumbering, 40-mile tall, 60-mile wide Gronckle. The sleepy boy rolled away, set comfortably adrift on the waters, as the great six-eyed beast's head continued to rise up into the clouds, ever-ascending, godly, and enraged. A massive clawed leg blasted up through the nearby ocean floor, then another, as the 100-mile tall creature pulled itself out higher and higher from where it had been so insultingly driven.

Toothless swam away faster than anyone, using the candy for ballast, even as he frantically ate more and more of it, knowing what he, what *they* were all up against now.

The dragon Queen. *The Red Death!*

*And she was still **growing!***

"EVERYONE, STAY TOGETHER!" Cynder cried, as they all staggered away through the water, heading out into deeper regions, as the vast feral dragon grew and grew between them. It threw back its head and powerful neck, and blasted out a horrific, sky-shattering bellow of fury, coming to a four-legged stand as it towered over the ocean, over the islands, looking hatefully down on them all.

"DID SHE EAT THE ENTIRE THING!?" Spyro shouted, over the rocking waves the Red Death's displacement caused. "HOW BIG WAS SHE, TO START WITH!?"

"NEVERMIND!" Cynder shouted, as the thunder boomed nearby, followed by a far off burst of lightning. "JUST START STEALING ALL THE SIZE YOU CAN, SPYRO!"

"R-RIGHT!"

Figment's fears raced back in as the water took up more and more of his body, and he stammered and fought to make sure he stayed upright—even as the Red Death trembled all across her four-legged, winged body, then boomed bigger, blowing up loudly to 140 miles, then 170, sending greater waves crashing out into him, spattering his face.

"FIGMENT! STAY CALM!" Cynder shouted over the storm, as the rain pelted them all relentlessly. She waded nearer, even as her huge feet lost purchase of the ocean floor, forcing her to climb onto Figment's musclebound arm comfortingly. "FIGMENT, IT'S OKAY! YOU'RE STILL ABOVE THE WATER! SEE?"

"R-RIGHT!" Figment whimpered, nodding, as another wave crashed into them both.

"CAN YOU RECALL THE BAG?"

"I...DON'T THINK WE SHOULD, JUST YET! I DON'T WANT THE CHAOS OF THE OCEAN TAKING ANY MORE AWAY FROM OUR GRASP!"

As they spoke, or shouted, Spyro rubbed his hands together, the 4-mile tall dragon flexing his considerably-greater bulk.

"OKAY! HERE GOES!"

He pressed both palms into the growing sides of the Red Death, from behind, and the 200-mile tall leviathan's power began to channel into Spyro—and right away, Spyro nearly passed out.

"G...GHAAAAAH!"

Immediately, his bulk exploded in mass, his quaking body blowing up twice as big, pulling 4 miles out of the giant Queen, and into himself, then another 5 after, pushing him up in less than a second to over 13 miles in size. His huge feet sank into the already-cracking ocean floor as he snarled in a mix of pleasure and agony, his body unready for this kind of intake. For all his effort, the Queen had lost less than ten miles...and with another trembling eruption of growth, that was more than compensated for, as the great dragon boomed up, up, expanding past 240 miles in size.

"THEN, USE YOUR IMAGINATION AGAIN!" Cynder bellowed, as the lightning crashed again, closer still. "THINK OF SOME WAY TO HELP SPYRO OUT!"

Figment struggled to get things in motion, but a new idea slowly started to form.

"I...I IMAGINE..."

At that, to Cynder's shock, a new portal opened up, right where the Red Deaths tail was, partially consuming the end of it's mace-like tip. It vanished within, leaving nothing coming out the other side, and Cynder looked back to Figment, openly concerned.

"WHAT?"

"JUST...WATCH!" Figment shouted back, clearly straining his concentration.

Another portal opened, right where the Queen's back right leg was, partially swallowing it, the knee vanishing into it. Within a few seconds, the Red Death's growing body boomed up to nearly 300 miles in size, nearly one-and-a-half million feet of angered bulk...before it suddenly started to dwindle down, slowly. The bellowing Queen stopped its tantrum and looked down, realizing it was shrinking down steadily, dropping to 280 miles, then 270. Even as Spyro grew and grew, stealing another 10 miles into his bloating, growing, 23-mile tall body, the majority of the deflation seemed to be coming from the portals.

"HOW...IT'S WORKING!?" Cynder balked, as Figment panted and shook, trying to open up a third portal, though this one missed the Queen by a few dozen yards.

"I'M...T-TAXING HER..."

"FIGMENT...THAT'S BRILLIANT!"

She threw her arms around Figment's huge neck, making the dragon blush, and the newest portal suddenly closed back up.

"M-MY CONCENTRATION..."

"OH! SORRY, NO, GO AHEAD! BUT THAT'S MY FIG!"

The third portal reopened, this time taking up the Queen's front left leg, sending it into a fitful wobble over the ocean, as it shook and dwindled down to 200 miles. The multitude of dark-red, craggy spines and outcroppings covering its back seemed to bristle in anger at the realization that it was being cheated out of its newfound size, making the Red Death roar and rage, its vast wings starting to beat faster and faster, until they sent out torrents of air that shamed the storm's gale winds.

Caught entirely off guard, Figment stumbled back through the ocean waters, as the Queen forced itself a little higher up, not quite flying, but lifting slightly. This, in turn, pulled its tail and feet up out of the portals, bit by bit.

"IT'S GETTING FREE!" Cynder hollered, as the lightning nearly struck down nearby, closer than ever. "CAN YOU MOVE THE PORTALS? IF WE CAN KEEP IT SMALLER UNTIL IT GROWTH SPURT FINISHES—"

"I'M...T-TRYING!"

As the 180-mile colossus began to pull completely free, it raised its head and bellowed again, the awful sound returning, crashing through the skies, reverberating for mile after mile. In seconds,

hundreds upon hundreds of gnat-sized dragons all flew over from the mainland and the coast, a great buzzing cloud of them, from all directions. With the staggering size difference, and with the crashing storm, no one noticed...until thousands of tiny fireballs all launched from seemingly nowhere, pelting and hammering the Red Death all over. Yet, their attacks merely sank into its vast body, vanishing into unharmed scales...and the Red Death rumbled and shook all over as the pelting relentlessly continued, more and more dragons showing up to add to the onslaught of flames.

"WAIT, ARE THOSE...OTHER DRAGONS?" Cynder shouted, already knowing to cover her ears, using her legs and tail to hang onto the larger Figment.

In response, the portals closed, and a blank-eyed Figment opened his mouth wide, aiming at the Red Death as well.

"WHAT ARE YOU..OH, NO! FIGMENT, NO!"

Though he had never tried it before, Figment managed to blast a completely monstrous orb of fire out, impacting the massive Queen from behind. It soaked in as well, and the Red Death's shaking increased exponentially as it growled, then smiled cruelly, and began to blow back up larger, and larger, and larger, as Cynder watched the 30-mile tall Spyro thud back in the ocean, and blast it with his own streak of flames, making it roar and huff and quiver and boom even bigger, even faster!

The Red Death's gambit paid off, as it towered higher and higher through the clouds, surging well past 300 miles; its vast scaled haunches trembled and erupted wider, thicker, heavier, the ocean floor cracking so deeply that huge coral-covered spikes of rock jutted up from the waters, as it snarled victoriously, and surged up to 350 miles...370 miles...its feet alone were as big as cities, now, islands with claws. Its head could have swallowed up an entire small country, each swelling fang now greater than any mere mountain. Each ashen scale could have housed an entire village with no trouble, as it left even the humongous Spyro no more than toy-sized, beside its glory.

"IT HEARD ME," Cynder moaned, keeping her ear holes covered, as the Queen continuously bellowed louder and louder orders, still more dragon arriving. "IT KNEW! HOW DO IT STOP THIS!?"

She looked up at Figment, then winced.

"SORRY IN ADVANCE, FIG!"

With no alternatives, she blasted a fireball up at Figment, only missing his head by a few feet as it exploded, loudly. Figment's dull expression tumbled into a growl of pain and confusion, as the sound left his ear holes ringing terribly. He blinked back to his senses, bringing a hand up to his head as he groaned.

"AH, WHAT...WAS THAT YOU!?"

"SPYRO, YOU...YOU'RE BACK!"

"...WHAT!?"

Cynder thought, then pointed to the other dragons, including the controlled Spyro, who kept

blasting the roaring Red Death bigger and bigger, pushing its size up past 400 miles.

"EGADS!" Figment shouted, still unable to hear. "WE HAVE TO SNAP SPYRO OUT OF—"

A fireball sailed through the skies, blowing up near Spyro's head, and the insanely vast muscle-dragon staggered back, wincing in pain, before snapping back to himself.

"OW! WHAT THE!?"

All three dragons looked out past the towering colossus Red Death had grown into, and they all caught sight of Toothless as he stomped back towards them, now bigger. Much, much bigger. At a mighty 22 miles in height, the black dragon was pushing through the storm and waves, hauling a sleeping, even-bigger Gronckle with him, having to use both bulging arms, despite his own stupendous size. He outclassed Figment by a healthy margin, second only to the Gronckle, Spyro, and the looming Red Death. He blasted another fireball nearby, letting it explode close enough to the Red Death to partially blind three of its six eyes.

The 440-mile tall creature huffed, silhouetted against the lightning a moment, its head lowering back down below the clouds. Over two million feet of angered bulk set its sights on the much smaller Toothless, who let the Queen open up its mouth, in time to cram the 60-mile wide balloon of a Gronckle into it, damming it up entirely! The Gronckle slumbered on, even as the stunned Red Death pulled back its huge head and shook it ponderously, trying to dislodge the blimp, to no avail.

The command roar now stifled, the many thousands of dragons all stopped, their collective clouds dissipating in the air. Spyro shook the rest of the internal fog off, saw everything, then glared daggers at the monstrous Queen. Even though it was still over 12 times larger than he, Spyro wasted no time in storming back over, and slapping both huge palms back into its hide, pulling harder and harder to shrink it down again.

"FIGMENT, BUDDY! MAKE WITH THE PORTALS! IF YOU'RE NOT BUSY!"

"YOU GOT IT!"

Right away, a single portal appeared, but it was rather small, and farther behind the Red Death. Cynder watched as it swelled larger, and larger, and larger, and larger, rapidly widening all the way out to a mile in diameter, then ten miles, then fifty. By a hundred miles, Figment was clearly beginning to grow dizzy, and it wavered slightly, but he pushed on, and it expanded out to 130 miles...160...

Within it, the uncertain blue energy swirl shifted, turning into a great, barren tundra, and as the portal kept expanding, Cynder put it together.

"YOU'VE ALMOST GOT IT! DUMP IT IN, AND WE'LL BE DONE WITH IT!"

Figment growled loudly, trying harder still, but he nearly fell over, as the portal stopped growing at around 180 miles in diameter. he tried again, and nearly flickered off once more.

"THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH, FIG! WE'LL DO THE REST! JUST, HOLD IT A LITTLE BIT LONGER, OKAY?"

At that, Cynder dropped off of Figment, crashed back into the ocean, and waded over to the massive Red Death. As Spyro swelled up to 50 miles, bigger than he had ever dreamed of growing, the foul Queen dwindled further down again, nearing 400 miles—still far too big to fit into the portal, but it was progress!

Seeing the portal, as well as watching how Cynder shoved at the colossal Queen's legs, it was clear to Toothless what was happening—well, clear enough. He lunged into the Red Death's huge feral chest, pushing with all his might. He was bigger now, bigger than even Cynder, by a lot, and he felt every groaning muscle push into the larger Queen, to little avail. Yet, the more Spyro grew, the more it shrank, and as it shuddered down to 350 miles, then 300, it slowly became easier to manage.

Toothless cared to think it was mostly him, but it also tangentially involved Spyro, who had stolen so much size that he loomed nearly all the way up past the Red Death's sides, now over 160 miles tall, an utter behemoth among giants! He shook and swelled with more power than he knew what to do with, gritting massive teeth, his shoulders and back muscles straining, his biceps and triceps erupting in mass as he started to pull the Red Death's bulk in steadily, closer and closer to the hovering portal, draining the great beast further down.

"ALMOST.. THERE..." he boomed, his voice impossibly massive and strong.

The smaller it shrank, the more the panicking Red Death thrashed around, trying to dislodge the Gronckle-balloon from its jaws, which painfully strained against the huge blimp's girth, as his side remained as it was throughout. At last, as it shrank down to 260 miles, it welled up a deep breath through flaring nostrils, and a horrid heat began to built around its jaws, indicating it was more than willing to blast the stupid Gronckle away with fire, if it needed to.

Just as the other dragons all realized what was building up, before it could blast the unsuspecting balloon, the Gronckle was pulled back out, bouncing free of the Queen's jaws, pulled out by Toothless, saving its life. Even the Red Death was momentarily surprised, before it started to swing its maw back open and command new followers—only to have another dragon crash down on its head, covering its eyes, and coiling what little of its tail it could around the huge Queen's mouth.

Toothless looked up, and blinked. Then, he practically cheered—in dragon, that is.

The Terrible Terror clung tight, blinding several of the Red Death's eyes, and just as the Queen brought up a massive hand to slam down a killing blow, the nearby lightning crashed down, striking the Terror, soaking into it, until the undamaged giantess rumbled and growled and huffed, swelling and spilling bigger, covering more and more of its head as it trembled and billowed larger, growing from 5 miles to 10, only for another bolt to strike her, blowing her roaring body up to 20 miles, then 40!

The others all watched as she grit her teeth and shook, well, terribly, as more and more lightning channeled down into her from the storm, making her a bigger and bigger lightning rod, attracting more and more lightning, still! She spilled bigger, slipping and bulging over the sides of the Red Death's muzzle, and her lengthening tail coiled all the way around its mouth, sealing it shut, just as it tried for a final command-roar. As the Queen snorted and thrashed, she slipped down to 200 miles, then 190, as the Terror stretched and rumbled and swelled massively, lightning battering her 80-mile body, pumping it so big so suddenly, that her huge feet slammed down into the bay, on either side of Toothless, and the both of them shoved furiously, his muscles surging, her body blowing up to an astonishing 150 miles,

putting her even with the shrinking Red Death, and with a last roar from all dragons they finally forced the Queen's tail into the portal, which hardly could maintain itself as Figment teetered in the waters, panting hard, shaking with mutual exertion and exhaustion.

The Red Death growled uselessly, shaking its head as its tail vanished into the vortex, then its back legs. A 200-mile tall Spyro finally hugged around the entirety of the Red Death, then rammed it back into the portal, all the way, letting go only as the Terror and Toothless released it, tumbling back, just as the raging Queen disappeared entirely, and the portal snapped closed, fading into nothing once more.

Figment shook like he had just lifted several mountains in succession, after a marathon. He took ragged breaths, but smiled wide the moment they all crowded in around him.

"YOU OKAY, BUDDY?" Spyro blast-spoke, shaking everything. Figment winced, but laughed, just the same. He was roughly a twentieth of his comrade's size, now, so it was a bit much. **"THAT WAS SOME PORTAL!"**

"I KNOW WHICH ONE IT WAS FOR, TOO," Cynder said, soothing Figment as he nodded, and shook all over worse. "CAN YOU SIT? IS IT TOO DEEP HERE?"

"I'LL B-BE ARLIGHT," Figment soothed back, putting a hand on Cynder's shoulder. Spyro's massive hand gently lowered to touch his shoulder, but he pulled it back when he realized what it would do. Instead, Cynder put her hand on his shoulder, then Toothless did the same, having to kneel his 22-mile tall self down to manage it. The looming Terror snorted, watching on, before growling softly at Toothless, who turned and rumbled something back gently. The Terror blinked, then crouched her country-sized body down low, and hugged them all in her wings. Spyro, being bigger still, dodged the gesture, and instead hugged her, only to go wide-eyed as he ballooned even *bigger*.

"S-SPYRO, LET G-GO!" Cynder yelped, as the Terror shrank down to about 100 miles, Spyro groaning in unrestrained joy as he felt himself booming up and up and up, his throbbing muscles smothering bigger, crushing in on everyone in the party a moment, before he forced himself to let go.

"HAAAH, S-SORRY, RIGHT!"

The clouds themselves swirled, the storm broken up by his sheer size. Sky-sized pectorals stretched and bulged over everyone, the 250-mile tall, the formerly kid-sized dragon now well past a million feet in size.

"GOOD GRIEF, THIS IS GOING TO TAKE SO MANY PORTALS TO FIX," Cynder huffed, as Toothless nudged Figment with a huge fingertip. "OH! FIGMENT, THIS IS TOOTHLESS! HE'S A FERAL, HE'S THE ONE WHO—"

"W-WE MET," Figment chuckled, grabbing Toothless' huge finger, and shaking it *hello*. "THANKS, TOOTHLESS...I THINK YOU MAY HAVE SAVED US ALL, HEH..."

"HIM, AND THE OTHER TWO DRAGONS," Cynder supplemented. "I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU AND THAT BALLOON OVER THERE DIDN'T FALL UNDER CONTROL, THIS ENTIRE

TIME..."

Toothless perked up his fins, then lead them all over to a nearby segment of an island that hadn't fully broken apart. He used his claws to draw here and there, until Cynder read from it as best she could:

"UH...THE BALLOON DRAGON...MUST HAVE BEEN A FRIEND OF HIS...HE LEFT, BUT THE BALLOON DRAGON WAS, EH...HE WAS THROWN...EXILED! OKAY, HE WAS EXILED...WHAT ARE THESE..."

"H-HE'S DEAF," Figment offered, watching the drawings along with her, as he leaned into the others. "MEDICALLY SPEAKING, HE CAN'T HEAR. THE QUEEN...MUST HAVE THROWN HIM OUT TO THE WILD, SINCE HE COULDN'T BE CONTROLLED."

"OH," Cynder cooed, impressed.

"INDEED, HEH. BEATS *UNSUBSTANTIATED GUESSWORK*, DOESN'T IT?"

"YOU HEARD ME!?"

"I DID...JUST...COULDN'T REACT."

"IF THAT WAS WHAT YOU WENT THROUGH, CYNDER..." Spyro began, having heard from way up high.

"WELL...LET'S JUST SAY WE ALL UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER THAT MUCH BETTER, AND LEAVE IT AT THAT?" she suggested, trying to smile.

"I'M ALL FOR THAT," Figment replied, before he finally faded out and fell asleep, surrounded by comrades of fantastically varied sizes, warm and safe, and thanked.

"WE'D BETTER LET HIM REST, THIS TIME," Cynder sighed, as Figment finally slept real sleep, for the first time in who-knows-how-long. "THEN WE'LL SUMMON THE BAG BACK, AND TAKE AN INVENTORY. IN THE MEANTIME, TOOTHLESS..."

The much-bigger dragon cocked his head at her, attending.

"HOW IS IT THAT YOU DIDN'T GET CONTROLLED?"

He brought up a gigantic palm and smacked himself, making the others attempt to intervene and stop him, when finally a small trickle of water flooded out from the side of his head. He did the same to the other side, and already, Cynder was laughing, a full, stupid, perfect laugh.

"YOU HAD *WATER* IN THE EARS!?"

Toothless grinned; this time, a row of teeth emerged, making even Cynder start slightly.

It would be a short but pleasant time, in which the party rested and relaxed, as best as their massive sizes allowed, on the mainland of Berk. In time, the viking tribes would come to know the carvings along the Eastern bay to be holy lands, canyons etched by the gods themselves, though the story they purportedly told was rather open to interpretation by the elders, and their elders, over the years. The dragons themselves would soon join the ranks of mankind, some even being heralded as gods themselves, considering their superior, towering size.

But before any of that, before any further adventures through space and time, Figment slept. He slept deep, and dreamed, at long, long last, of home.

The Red Death groaned in defeat and exhaustion, all of its struggles leaving it drained and slumped in place among the vast wasteland in which it found itself. Even at about 100 miles in size, even so strong and massive, it saw nothing but ruins and howling winds for as far as it could see, and after a time of self-pity, it closed all six of its eyes, and sighed. As the fallen Queen dragon finally fell into an unhappy slumber, a much smaller shape gradually crept in closer, and closer, still. A clawed black hand reached out, needful, grasping.

The Queen towered, even slumped low, so much bigger than the shape, as it placed a hand upon its scaly hide, and began to fervently absorb size into itself.

"Well...they discarded you here, then, the same as myself," Maleficent growled, the black dragoness already beginning to boom up bigger, and bigger. "How very, *very* interesting..."