

Martha and the Dragon

adapted by Brooke Bailey

Martha set off into the world because she wanted to do good. She was tired of staying at home and wanted travel and adventure.

Martha was not like other young women. She had special powers and was a healer who could talk to birds, trees, animals and even clouds. One day she passed a city that was being attacked by a mean army that wanted to steal its treasures. Martha summoned the clouds, who were her friends, and asked them to make a flash flood. They loved Martha so much they did so, and the wicked army was washed all away.

Soon after this, Martha traveled to a city where they had an even bigger problem. The people told her about a horrible dragon-beast that lived in the sea nearby. It was devastating the landscape- coming out of the water and killing all the fields and sheep, and the people had no food. It was called the Tarasque, and the King was desperate. Martha didn't say much, but left straight for the seashore. The horrible beast was there, slithering along the shore and spitting bones. IT was truly terrible. It has the head of a lion, the legs and long claws of a bear. It's body was that of a bull, huge and powerful. It had a turtle-shell, so it was almost impossible to kill. It also had a long tail like a scorpion, with a sting at the end. And if you tired to attack it, it could go into the water and breathe under there, like a whale.

It snarled and foamed at Martha. Its red eyes gleamed. Martha had no sword. She had no lance or arrows. All she had was a little bottle of holy water, which she had blessed with magic and spells. She sprinkled some of the water at the beast, and it roared, but Martha only began to sing. She sang a soft little song:

Tired dragon, lonely dragon,

It's okay to sleep sometimes,

It's okay to sleep.

And an amazing thing happened- the beast's shaggy head began to sway, and it fell deep asleep.

Martha came and snipped a lock of the beast's mane and put it into her pocket.

Then she sang:

Tired dragon, lonely dragon,

go into the sea.

Here on land is not your place,

And they will find you and give chase,

So go into the sea.

The dragon woke up, sleepily slithered into the sea, and never came back again.

Martha showed every one the bit of mane and they saw that she had tamed the dragon. It was a good thing she had set the dragon free, however, because they were still afraid of it and might have killed it. But as it was, everyone, even the dragon, was safe.

The King was so grateful to the beast for going away that he renamed his city and so it stands to this day: Tarascon.



(* in the original of this tale, Martha brings the creature back to the city and a howling mobs kills it, King Kong fashion. I thought this was just too depressing so I changed it!)