

UNLIKELY FRIENDS

"Ready or not, here I come!"

It was a beautiful sunny day, and Princess Ivy was playing hide-and-seek in the woods with her parents. Ivy was hidden behind a large oak tree, and she heard her dad, coming closer and closer to her hiding spot.

"I'm gonna find you!" he said, sneaking up to the oak tree. Ivy giggled and ran away further into the forest to find a better hiding spot.

She hid behind a berry bush and waited for her mom or dad to come and find her, but nobody came. Ivy realized that she must be lost.

All of a sudden, the sky became dark, and the clouds were gray. The rain started to pour down on the poor princess, soaking her pretty blue dress.

She got up from her hiding spot to find shelter, and she noticed a cave nearby. She ran into the cave to dry off and wait for her parents to find her. Her eyes began to droop, and she soon found herself fast asleep against the wall of the dark, damp cave.

"What is she?"

"Do you think she's yummy?"

"What's that mop on her head?"

"Why is she so small and funny shaped?"

"Where are her wings?"

Princess Ivy slowly opened her eyes to see a group of some kind of large lizards with brightly colored scales standing over her. They were ugly and strange.

[What do you think these creatures were?]

Ivy cried out in surprise and jumped up. She started to back away, trying to figure out how to get out of there. She tried to distract them and yelled, "Hey! Look over there! It's a floating banana!" as she pointed behind the big creatures.

All the monsters turned around. "I want to see the floating banana!"

Ivy tried to run while they were looking away but she tripped on a rock on the ground of the cave. "Ouchie!" The monsters looked down at her and curled up their tails in the shape of a question mark.

“We don’t see any floating bananas... What kind of dragon are you?”

“Dragon? I’m not a dragon! I am a princess!” said Ivy.

They stared at her with big, googly eyes and noticed the crown on her head. “What is that? That shiny thing?”

Princess Ivy sat up, brushing off her pretty blue dress. "It's my crown, of course!" she said. "You don't know what a crown is?"

The dragons shook their heads and grouped closer around her to look at the shiny object sitting on her hair.

"Ooooooooooh! Ahhhhhhhhhh!" they said together. They liked the crown so much that green smoke started to come out of their noses in big heart shapes. The smoke floated into Ivy’s face, making her cough.

"Wait a minute," they asked, "what are you doing in our home?"

Princess Ivy laughed. "This is your home?! It's a cave!"

[How do you think the dragons felt about Ivy laughing at their home? What would have been a nicer thing for Ivy to say?]

The dragons glared at her. One yelled out, "Let’s just eat her! I wonder what princesses taste like!"

The group began to move in, and Princess Ivy started to panic. "WAIT! If you let me leave, I will let you keep my crown forever and ever!"

This made the dragons rub their bellies in thought.

“Forever and ever? That sounds like a loooooooooong time.” they said.

“It’s so shiny! I want it!”

They stood up straight and told her "We will make that deal. Give us the crown and leave!”

The Princess handed over her crown and went to leave the cave, but the storm had picked up and thunder was roaring across the forest. She couldn't walk back to the castle in this weather! Without her parents, she was completely alone and stuck with these dragons.

She walked back into the cave in tears.

[How would you feel if you were trapped in the cave like Princess Ivy? Why do you think Princess Ivy started crying?]

"What are you still doing here? We thought you were leaving," said one of the dragons.

"It's raining too hard. I couldn't even see my own tiny, perfect feet," Ivy sobbed, stomping her foot on the ground.

The dragons rolled their eyes and growled. "You can stay here until the storm passes, but once it is over, you must leave. Just stop crying already, you'll flood the cave!"

Princess Ivy sat down against one of the walls of the big and dark cave. She was trapped with a bunch of mean dragons, very far from home.

The dragons ignored her and began to talk to each other, but one dragon with blue scales gave Ivy a small smile before joining the others.

Ivy watched as all the dragons started to play with a ball. She was feeling alone and wanted something to do, so Ivy decided to ask if she could play with them. As the Princess walked over she saw that they were playing around on the muddy floor.

EW! she thought. My pretty blue dress! I can't get it dirty in the mud!

One of the dragons called to her, "Hey, catch!"

But it was too late. She watched as the ball flew closer and closer until...

BAM!

The ball had smacked her in the middle of her face, covering her in mud.

Another dragon called out, "Wow! She sucks! She can't even catch a ball!"

Princess Ivy wiped the mud off her face angrily as all the other dragons laughed at her. She stomped up to the ball and tried to kick it back to the group, but she missed and slipped on the ground, landing on her back.

For the rest of the day, none of the other dragons wanted to talk to her, and they kept looking over at her to whisper and laugh. Ivy felt like she wanted to cry again.

[Have you ever felt alone like Ivy even though you were in a group of people?]

The rest of the dragons began to prepare for bed. Princess Ivy had no bed so she tried to get cozy on the cold hard floor, counting sheep wearing ballet shoes in her head. She overheard the dragons talking amongst themselves again.

"She's so small and gross!"

"She looks so weird!"

"What's that mop on her head?"

“She looks so slimy! I dare you to touch her!”

"Cut it out! Just because she looks different doesn't mean you shouldn't be nice to her!"

Ivy opened her eyes to see the blue dragon standing up to the others. She felt thankful to him for sticking up for her.

[Have you ever stood up for someone, or has someone stuck up for you? How did that make you feel?]

"Jeez, calm down. We were just joking." The other dragons left Ivy and her new friend alone.

"Thank you for sticking up for me, but why did you do that?" Ivy asked. "They probably hate you now."

"Well, sometimes they aren't the nicest dragons and they make a lot of bad choices. I don't like to see anyone being treated the way you were," the blue dragon said as he sat down beside her.

"I never thought dragons could be nice. I guess I was a little mean too," Ivy said sleepily.

"That's okay. We can move on now and be the bestest friends ever, except... I don't know your name." he told her as he yawned. Pink smoke floated out of his nose in the shape of a bed, hitting Ivy in the face yet again!

Ivy coughed out, "My name is Princess Ivy."

The two settled down together, and they both fell asleep, happy with their new friendship.

Early the next day, the rest of the group was awoken by laughter and the sound of a ball hitting the ground. Everyone sat up to see the Princess playing catch with the blue dragon. They were surprised to see her pretty blue dress covered in mud and dirt. The two giggled and continued to pass the ball around. Outside, it was still raining heavily, so the Princess couldn't leave just yet.

The entire morning, they played pass while the rest of the dragons watched. They all wanted to play with them but didn't dare to try. After some time, the two were laughing so hard the dragons couldn't help it. Eventually, one by one, they started to join the game. Soon enough, everyone was playing.

[Why do you think the other dragons wanted to play with Princess Ivy now? Was it because they saw the blue dragon, one of their friends, playing with her?]

In the middle of the game, Ivy looked away for a moment, and someone threw the ball at her.

BAM!

The ball had hit Ivy in the face **AGAIN!** Everyone was quiet for a few seconds until Ivy started to giggle. They all began to laugh together, now with her instead of at her!

They all played together for the rest of the day, laughing and having fun. The dragons realized that just because Ivy was small and didn't have wings didn't mean she couldn't play like everyone else. Princess Ivy realized that just because all of the dragons looked ugly and strange, didn't mean they couldn't be nice.

[Have you ever changed what you thought of someone you didn't like when you first met them? What made you change your mind?]

The storm eventually passed, and out came the sun with blue skies. Ivy was happy that she could go home, but she didn't want to part with her new friends.

"I don't want to leave the game but I have to go back home to my parents! They'll be looking for me," she told the group.

"I'll give you a ride home!" the blue dragon said. "That way you can get there faster. You can come visit us and play anytime you want!"

The dragon took Ivy home to her parents, who were very happy to see her, even though she was so muddy and her hair was going EVERYWHERE because of the wind.

Ever since then, Ivy went to see her new friends as often as she could. Their favorite game to play together was catch!

All thanks to the blue dragon, Ivy never felt alone again.

[Do you think anyone can be like the blue dragon? What about you?]