

What's in the box?

Charlotte lay on the couch in her living room, mindlessly flipping through the channels on her television. It was a gray day outside. Snow hung in the air and there was absolutely nothing on television and absolutely nothing to do. Suddenly, the doorbell rang. *Odd, I wasn't expecting anyone, or anything for that matter.* She slowly peeled herself off of the couch and trudged to her front door, the afghan from the couch wrapped around her. The doorbell ringing became more persistent as she came closer to the door.

"Okay! I'm coming!" Charlotte shouted. The ringing abruptly ceased. Charlotte neared the door and rose on her tiptoes to look through the peephole. There was nothing there. She slowly opened her front door and tucked herself safely behind it. She peered around the door and noticed the small box sitting on her door mat. "Eh, it's gotta be the neighbor's box", Charlotte said aloud. She picked up the box and took it inside. She noted that the small, brown box was unusually warm for as cold as it was outside. She placed the box on her little kitchen table and proceeded to go back to watching TV. No harm, no foul.

Hours later after watching a confusing documentary on the ins and outs of illegal file sharing, Charlotte felt her stomach grumble. She got up from the couch and padded into her kitchen. Her pantry didn't have much in it except for a jar of peanut butter and a can of sardines. She turned her attention to the small, brown box on the table. *Maybe it's some care package, after all it's almost the holidays. Maybe there's some expensive cheese in there or something.* Charlotte grabbed a knife from a butcher's block on the counter and proceeded to carefully open the box. She set the knife aside and opened the flaps. There was an abundance of shredded paper inside. After digging through it for what seemed like an eternity she finally hit an object. She extracted a small, stone dragon. The figure was light gray in color with very sharp details and was warm to the touch but a comforting warm. Suddenly, the figure started to glow in her hand. It glowed brighter and brighter which startled her. Charlotte dropped it on the table with a yelp! Peering up at her was a little dark red dragon sitting on her kitchen table. The dragon stood up and rested its hands on its orange belly and trilled happily.

"This can't be real. I must be dreaming," Charlotte said. She pulled out her kitchen chair which made the dragon scramble behind the box. "It's okay." She slowly sat down. The dragon peered around the corner of the box. "I'm as skittish as you are, little...dragon." The dragon trilled again and came out from behind the box. It made its way toward her.

"Mama," it squeaked.

"Oh no. I can't even keep a simple house plant alive and my land lord doesn't allow pets, let alone a dragon," replied Charlotte.

“Mama,” it repeated itself. “Mama.” It nodded its head. The decision was final. It crawled into the box and shredded paper flew this way and that. It came out of the box, dragging a note that it laid in front of Charlotte.

*This dragon has been bestowed upon you for your good deeds to mankind. This dragon will protect you as much as you protect it. This dragon will be your forever companion and help you in good times and bad. This dragon's name is Mortimer. He likes popcorn. Enjoy!*

“Mortimer?” asked Charlotte. Mortimer shook his head and trilled happily.

“Mama!” Mortimer exclaimed.

“No, Charlotte. My name is Charlotte.”

“Char!” Mortimer exclaimed. A flame shot out of his nostrils and set the note on fire. He danced happily at his little trick.

“No! Bad, Mortimer!” exclaimed Charlotte as she quickly batted out the flames. “Look, first things first, you’re going to have to control that torch of yours.”

Mortimer just shrugged at her and trilled happily.

The End