

All Sorts of Dragons

FADE IN:

EXT. SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS, 1700S - DAY

A little DRAGON, PUFFIE, reclines on the nose of Sir McGowan's steed, DUDLEY, as they clop along at a sedate pace.

The KNIGHT, SIR MCGOWAN, 60s, strong, fully armored, humors the presence of the little beast on his horse in good nature.

PUFFIE

There really are all sorts of dragons, you know!

The claws of the little dragon tickle.

Dudley tosses his head.

PUFFIE

Tall ones, short ones, fat ones, thin ones, fire-breathers, ice-brea...

Dudley pulls up, WHINNIES, blows his nose.

This lifts the little dragon into the air.

The dragon hovers in place with an annoyed expression until the horse relaxes, settles into her former repose.

Dudley clops along again.

PUFFIE

Now, where was I?

SIR MCGOWAN

(Scottish brogue)

Thee wert sayin' that there be all sorts of dragons, little lizard.

PUFFIE

Ah, yes. Thank you for reminding me. And I am not a little lizard. My name is Puffie, and I, good knight, am a true and proper dragon!

The diminutive creature HUFFS and small tendrils of smoke waft from her nostrils.

SIR MCGOWAN
I see my little friend. Thine
pardon.

Sir McGowan bows his head to her, then lifts the visor on his shiny helmet, reveals a face given to many laugh lines.

He peers myopically at Puffie.

SIR MCGOWAN
A proper dragon, indeed!

Sir McGowan tries to scratch his head through the opening of his helmet, GRUMBLES, and pulls it off, reveals a dome of sparse, gray hair.

SIR MCGOWAN
A pox on all bedbugs!

PUFFIE
Bedbugs? Let me see!

The little dragon perks up. Puffie takes wing and hovers over Sir McGowan's head.

PUFFIE
Ah, your head is covered with them.

Puffie's tongue darts out and spears the little insects, retracts her tongue back into her jaws.

Sounds of tiny crunches as Puffie eats each one.

SIR MCGOWAN
Aye, friend dragon.

Sir McGowan groans and tears off one of his gauntlets, sets it across his lap, and scratches his head.

Tugs back on the reins to halt his steed.

SIR MCGOWAN
The bed in the inn I stayed at last
night was mightily infested.

Puffie flies back to Dudley's nose and resettles, burps the tiniest of belches when she turns over onto her back, her stomach distended.

Sir Gowan sighs in pleasure as his discomfort is relieved, hangs his helmet on the horn of his saddle, leans forward and regards his newly met acquaintance close.

SIR MCGOWAN

My thanks, true friend, I am in thy debt.

PUFFIE

Don't mention it. It was time for my mid-day snack. So, what brings you out this way, Sir Knight?

Sir McGowan sits up tall and proud.

SIR MCGOWAN

The village sent me out to slay the monster that's been terrorizin' these haunts these last few months.

PUFFIE

Oh?

SIR MCGOWAN

But, thou hast not to fear, friend dragon. I hunt larger prey than thee.

Puffie feigns nonchalance.

PUFFIE

Oh? What kinds of mayhem has this gigantic monster been causing?

SIR MCGOWAN

Terrible things! They say he casts strong magics of persuasion. Makes cows and sheep stand on their hind legs and clog dance!

PUFFIE

She, actually, and conga dance, but do go on.

SIR MCGOWAN

Hey, wait. Thou canst not fool me. Thou sayest not 'tis thee that's been doin' this bedevilment?

The little dragon shrugs and holds up one of her front paws to admire her talons.

PUFFIE

I get bored easily.

SIR MCGOWAN

I shan't believe a flyspeck as small as thee couldst control the mind of a squirrel, let alone a big creat...

Dudley chooses that moment to sit back on his haunches, spills Sir McGowan onto his back.

Sir McGowan struggles like a terrapin in his armor, arms and legs kick to right himself.

He flips over and raises himself back to his knees.

He gives the little dragon a suspicious glare.

SIR MCGOWAN

Coincidence. Dudley is tired, that's all.

The little dragon raises her eyebrows. Dudley lifts himself to all fours, then sits back down on top of Sir McGowan.

SIR MCGOWAN

Gumph hmm awfff!

A muffled CRY from beneath the horse's derriere.

Puffie SNIFFS.

PUFFIE

I can't hear you! I guess you'll just have to wait until some huge monster comes along and terrorizes your horse off you.

One hand of Sir McGowan creeps out from under the horse's rump and raises itself in entreaty.

SIR MCGOWAN

Pleefss, Gumph hmm awfff!

PUFFIE

Oh, very well. If you insist.

Puffie yawns, flips over, curls up nose to tail for a nap as Dudley stands back up.

PUFFIE

If it is no bother for you, would you please wake me when you water your horse?

A tiny cloud of steam rises from the little dragon's snout as she falls asleep.

EXT. STREAM SIDE - DAY

Sir McGowan walks his steed, ducks under low branches along the trail next to the stream.

His little ward sleeps through the hottest part of the day while the knight rubs his chin and considers his dilemma.

SIR MCGOWAN

(softly)

Do I slay yon beastie? He, no, she,
is such a likeable sort, even if
she madest Dudley sit on me. For
that matter, couldst I slay Puffie
if she fain not be slain? I suppose
if I wert to do it, now would be
most opportune, whilst she
slumbers.

He reaches his hand down, begins to draw his sword from its scabbard.

Puffie lifts one eyelid, yawns.

PUFFIE

I was wondering when you'd get
around to that.

Sir McGowan sighs, allows his sword to slide back into its sheath.

SIR MCGOWAN

The truth is, little drag...
Puffie, that is, I be of two minds
about slayin' thee.

PUFFIE

I know.

SIR MCGOWAN

You do?

PUFFIE

Doesn't it stand to reason that if
I can control minds that I might be
able to read thoughts, also?

Sir McGowan pulls Dudley up, scratches his head.

SIR MCGOWAN
Aye, thee hast reason.

PUFFIE
For my own part, good knight, I've
been awake for the last few minutes
following your thoughts. In truth,
I crave entertaining company.

SIR MCGOWAN
Thou sayest not. Truly?

PUFFIE
Yea, truly.

Puffie rolls over onto her stomach, lifts her paws under her chin, bats her long eyelashes at the knight.

PUFFIE
If I were to have a true friend,
conversationalist, and traveling
companion, I would mend my ways.

SIR MCGOWAN
Really?

PUFFIE
Oh, to be sure. That and a small
portion of whatever vermin happens
to be infesting you or your steed
at any given time.

SIR MCGOWAN
Then I am most agreed, princess
dragon!

Sir McGowan stretches forth his hand.

Puffie stands up, proffers her own dainty paw to seal the bargain.

A flea jumps from the hem of Sir McGowan's tunic sleeve.

Puffie snaps it up.

PUFFIE
No time like the present to begin
our relationship, eh, Sir Knight?

SIR MCGOWAN
Indeed, princess. Indeed.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

The new friends enter a meadow.

A flock of SHEEP cease to graze.

Instead, they stand on their hind legs, and begin to dance in a a conga dance line.

Their expressions vary from bewilderment to terror.

With no idea why they do this strange thing.

SHEEP

Ba-ba-ba-baaaaaa!

On the baaaaaa! they kick their right legs out and to the side in unison.

SHEEP

Ba-ba-ba-baaaaaa!

Now the left legs.

Sir McGowan pulls Dudley up, gives Puffie a stern glance.

Puffie's expression, sheepish.

SIR MCGOWAN

Puffie.

PUFFIE

Oh, alright.

Puffie sits up, crosses her eyes.

Smoke pours forth from her nostrils.

PUFFIE

There. That should do it.

The sheep drop to all-fours, graze.

Puffie and Sir McGowan nod in satisfaction.

SIR MCGOWAN

Thou wert sayin'?

The two friends continue to converse as they disappear from sight along the stream side trail.

FADE OUT.

THE END.