

(Word count: 1499)

“Why I outta...” Jimmy said, pushing up the sleeves of his Superman sweatshirt.

“Oh yeah!” Betty-Anne snapped. “You’ll be sorry.”

“Mom said I can’t hit girls. But you’re not a girl. You’re just stupid.”

“I am so a girl. Take that back or I’ll beat your brains in.”

“I’ll beat your brains in worse.”

“Oh yeah!” she sneered, raising her arms and lunging at her twin.

Jimmy stumbled backward. “Why you...now you’re gonna get it!” he yelled, lunging at her.

Within moments the two were rolling around on the floor. “Let me go!” she screamed, trying to wrap her legs around his squirming body. If she could get her legs around him she would squeeze his stupid brains out.

“No,” he yelled, reaching his hand for her ponytail. She grabbed his wrist and pushed his arm against the floor.

“Owww!” he yelped, struggling to free his arm, grabbing her ponytail with his other hand.

“Owww!” she cried. “Let go or I’ll...”

“Are you two done?” Grandpa asked, walking into the room.

“She started it.”

“I did not. He did. He called me stupid.”

“She is stupid,” Jimmy said, pushing her off him and sitting up. “She’s thinks she’s the boss of me, but she’s not.”

“I am not stupid!” she cried, rubbing her head. “He pulled my hair. He’s stupid.”

“No one’s stupid,” Grandpa said, shaking his head slowly. “Both of you upstairs right now and get ready for bed. I’ll be up to tell you a bedtime story. ”

“But, Grandpa,” Jimmy said, pushing Betty-Anne. “She’s the one...”

“Idiot,” she said, pushing him back.

“See Grandpa?” Jimmy said, pushing himself up off the floor.

“Never mind...It’s past your bedtime. No more arguing.”

Grumbling, they both walked out of the living room. “See what you did?” Betty Anne whispered. “Now we have to go to bed. It’s all your stupid fault.”

“Oh shut up,” Jimmy whispered. “It’s your fault.”

“When mommy and daddy come and get us tomorrow, I’m telling you pulled my hair.”

“I don’t care,” he replied, shrugging his shoulders, sticking out his tongue.

“A bird’s gonna poop on that.”

“Is not,” he said, looking up at the ceiling...just in case.

“Upstairs you two...now,” Grandpa said.

“Beat you,” Jimmy said, sprinting past his sister, heading for the stairs.

She chased after him, trying to grab the back of his sweatshirt.

Grandpa watched them scrambling up the stairs. He smiled, shaking his head slowly. He remembered the fights he and his sister had when they were kids. The memory, reminded him of

a story his grandpa had told them. Smiling, he decided tonight he would tell his grandchildren that story...the story about Harmony.

After Jimmy and Betty-Anne brushed their teeth and put on their pyjamas, they ran into grandpa's guest bedroom and jumped on to the king-size bed. Betty-Anne poked Jimmy's arm.

"Don't touch me," he yelled. "Grandpa! She's touching me!"

Grandpa walked into the room.

"I'm not!" she pouted.

"Alright, you two," Grandpa said, sliding the easy chair to the side of the bed. "Settle down and I'll tell you a story my grandpa told me and my sister one night after we were fighting."

"She's still stupid," Jimmy replied, squinting at his sister.

"I am not. You are," she squinted back.

"Settle down," Grandpa said, sitting on the chair.

Jimmy and Betty-Anne looked at each other then slid to their side of the bed--as far away from each other as possible.

"Are you ready?" Grandpa asked. Both children nodded.

"It happened long ago," he began, "in a peaceful, happy village far, far away where a kind and gentle dragon, named Harmony, lived among the people. Harmony loved everyone and they loved her. You see," Grandpa added, "she had a very special, magic power that made people kind and loving to each other.

"But, one day a mean and cruel wizard came to the village. He was very powerful and wanted to destroy Harmony. Every day the wizard lied, telling the people Harmony was their enemy and must be banned from the village. Soon the people believed the wizard and started

fighting and calling each other nasty, cruel names. They turned their backs on their friend. The wizard placed a curse on Harmony, and banished her to a lonely cave for one hundred years or until someone showed her love and kindness. Then the wizard told the people if anyone said her name out loud, they would be arrested. Soon Harmony was forgotten.

“One day, a little boy and his twin sister snuck away from the village to find out if Harmony was real. You see,” Grandpa continued. “The children’s grandpa secretly told them about the kind and caring dragon. He told them how happy and kind the people of the village were before the wizard came. The children decided they would find her, and bring her back to the village so everyone would stop fighting and bullying each other.

“When they found Harmony’s cave, they began arguing. ‘You’re stupid!’ the little girl shouted. ‘Oh yeah? You’re stupider,’ her brother shouted back. Harmony woke up and stepped from her cave. She saw the children wrestling on the grass. ‘Stop!’ she roared, and the children stopped. They looked up at her; their eyes wide; their mouths open. ‘You’re real,’ the little girl, whispered.

“Harmony smiled, sitting down on the grass. ‘Yes,’ she replied. ‘I am real. As real as the love you have for each other.’ The little boy looked up at the mighty dragon. ‘I don’t love her,’ he snapped. ‘She’s stupid.’

“Harmony looked at the little boy and asked, ‘What would you do if someone was cruel to your sister?’ The little boy thought for a moment. ‘I’d tell them to leave her alone.’ Harmony smiled, and asked, ‘Why?’ He looked at his sister. He wasn’t angry anymore. ‘Um,’ he said. ‘Well, she’s kinda good sometimes, and she’s not afraid of frogs. Once I caught a frog and put it on her shoulder. She didn’t even cry. She didn’t even tell on me.’

“Harmony chuckled then asked the little girl what she would do if someone was mean to her brother. The little girl smiled. She wasn’t angry anymore. ‘I’d tell them to leave him alone,’ she said, and Harmony smiled. ‘Why?’ she asked. The little girl thought for a moment. ‘Sometimes,’ she said, ‘he’s nice to me. Once I fell off my bike, and he helped me up. I was crying and he hugged me. And when I have bad dreams, he lets me sleep in his bed cuz I’m scared.’

“Harmony smiled. ‘What are your names?’ she asked. The little girl replied, ‘Betty-Anne.’; ‘Jimmy,’ her brother replied.”

“Hey Grandpa,” Jimmy interrupted, “that’s our names!”

“That’s right and they were seven too,” Grandpa replied.

“What did Harmony do, Grandpa?” Betty-Anne asked.

“Well,” Grandpa continued. “She told them how proud she was that they were being kind. Then she told them how happy the village was before the wizard banished her. When she finished, Betty-Anne and Jimmy had tears in their eyes. ‘Will you come back to the village so everyone will be kind again?’ Jimmy asked. Harmony shook her head, sadly. ‘Not until the wizard’s curse is broken by kindness and love. If you tell me something kind and loving about each other, then the curse will be broken.’ The children looked at each other,” Grandpa paused, looking at his granddaughter. “What do you think Betty-Anne said?”

She looked at her brother for a moment. “Did she say that Jimmy is a really good hockey player, and tells funny jokes and makes her laugh? And,” she said thoughtfully, “she’s glad he’s her brother. Is that what Betty-Anne said, Grandpa?”

Grandpa smiled. “That’s exactly what she said.” He looked at his grandson. “What do you think Jimmy said?”

Jimmy looked at his sister. “Um,” he replied. “She makes really good cookies with their mommy and she’s not really stupid cuz she can spell lots of words. And,” he added thoughtfully, “that he kinda loves her, but if he tells her, she’ll laugh at him.”

“Yes,” Grandpa replied. “But she didn’t laugh. She smiled and hugged Jimmy and he hugged her back. Their love and kindness to each other broke the wizard’s curse. Then Harmony and the children returned to the village. The people were so happy their friend was back, but the wizard was furious. He tried to cast his curse again, but this time the people gathered around their friend and shouted, ‘Leave our village. You have no power here!’ Suddenly, the wizard swirled away in a twisting, angry wind, never to return again. Harmony was back and everyone was happy and kind to each other again.”

Grandpa smiled, standing. “Now off to sleep,” he said. “And, always remember Harmony and keep kindness and love in your hearts.”

“I’ll remember,” Betty-Anne promised.

“Me too, Grandpa!”

Grandpa smiled, walking to the door. *Yes, he thought, they will remember Harmony...just as he had all these years.*