



Tolerance

JOSH THE DRAGON

by Diana Hsu

Once upon a time, there lived a big dragon. His name was Josh. One day while Josh was sitting under a big green tree, he thought, “Oh, how nice it would be to have a friend to play with.” So that sunny morning, Josh went away, far away, to look for another dragon to be his friend. On his way he met Ethan the elephant.

“Hi,” said the elephant with twinkling eyes, “my name is Ethan! What’s your name?”

“Josh,” he said, “and I’m looking for a friend -- a dragon friend that is.” Josh examined Ethan for a moment and then said rather suspiciously, “You have big ears and a long nose. You are not a dragon, are you?”

“No” said the elephant, “but that does not matter, does it? I can still be your friend. You see, I’m looking for a friend, too. I’ve been feeling sort of lonely lately.”

But Josh was not listening to Ethan. He looked at Ethan with coolness and then turned around and trotted off. Ethan, with great sadness, watched Josh leave.

As Josh moved on, he saw a lion. The lion leapt forward with great eagerness. The lion then shook his brilliant mane and smiled at Josh. “What are you doing?” asked the lion.

Josh watched the lion for a moment. Josh had never seen a lion before and was amazed by his beauty. “Oh” he finally replied, “I’m looking for a friend. My name is Josh.”

“Oh, I’m looking for a friend, too. My name is Ali, Ali the lion. Come, let’s play together. How about having a race or playing a game of tag?” Ali jumped and twirled in anticipation.

At first Josh felt a rush of happiness, but then he suddenly remembered that Ali wasn’t a dragon. Josh looked into Ali’s smiling face and said, “But you can’t be my friend! You are not a dragon.” And before the lion could say anything more, Josh turned and ran away.

As Josh was traveling down a country road, he met a little white rabbit. The little rabbit was a bit shy. It hid behind a huge tree, listening carefully with his big long ears and peeking out behind the tree with only one eye. When the little rabbit saw the dragon he thought, “What a big dragon. I hope it’s a friendly dragon, otherwise I will have to run away and hide.” As Josh came nearer, the little rabbit whispered, “Excuse me, are you a friendly dragon?”



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Josh really was a friendly dragon, so the little rabbit did not have to be afraid. The little rabbit just sat quietly behind the tree and watched Josh. Josh also sat under the same tree where the little rabbit was hiding.

Something very amusing caught Josh's attention just a few trees away. There was a clown laughing with great heartiness as he toppled over his huge shoes. Every time the clown toppled over his feet, he lay on his back and laughed and laughed and laughed. Suddenly, Josh realized that he was laughing too and like the clown, Josh laughed and laughed and laughed. They both laughed until they had the hiccups, and that made them both laugh even harder. Josh finally got up and went over to the clown and said: "Hi there, you are a funny clown! I never ever in my whole dragon life laughed so much!"

"You are not the only one. Go ask the children, and they will tell you that I make children laugh and laugh and help them forget all their troubles! I love to make people happy. What do you like to do?" asked the jolly clown.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'd like to do," replied Josh in great seriousness. "I'd like to find a friend to play with -- a dragon friend, that is."

The clown began to laugh again. "You must be kidding, the whole world can be your friend." The clown laughed and laughed and laughed. Josh suddenly felt embarrassed and a bit sad. He began to feel that no one understood him. Josh said to himself: "I only want a dragon friend. Is that too much to ask?" So Josh crept back and sat by himself under the tree. As he sat there, two large tears fell from his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. He tried to brush them away, as they began to sting his cheeks.

"Josh, Joshua." He could hear his name being called in the distance. "Are you all right?" As Josh looked up in surprise, he saw Ethan the elephant, Ali the lion, the little white rabbit, and the clown toppling over his shoes and laughing and laughing and laughing. They all surrounded him. Ethan the elephant gently patted his head. Ali the lion licked the salty tears from his red cheeks. The little white rabbit hopped into his lap and nuzzled up against him. And the clown made silly faces until Josh laughed with him. Suddenly, Ali the lion leapt into the air and said gleefully, "Come on, let's hold hands and dance and be happy."

"Yes, let's be happy. You are all my friends!" exclaimed Josh. "You are all my special, special friends. We are all so different and lovely, like the colors of a great big rainbow." And they all held hands and danced in a circle.

From that moment onward, they were all the best of friends. They shared many wonderful times together. And Josh realized that he would have missed out on all the fun if he had only one dragon friend.