

Watched from the battlements of both castles, she stepped out along the Arbor Highway, her scales catching the sunlight. A creature of such pure power that the King of Arbor dared not go down to greet her. "Guard my country!" he shouted down. "Kill any Pomosa thieves!"

The King of Pomosa sulked and stamped, “I want a dragon! I need a dragon to guard my country from that ugly great beast!”

Ambassadors were sent to China and, much to their surprise, a dragon was found who agreed to come in return for ginger, gooseberries and goldfish.

Watched from the battlements of both castles he came striding along the Pomosa Highway. “Fearful!” murmured the men. “Huge!” whispered the women. “But it’s so beautiful!” they all agreed.

Both nations gasped in amazement.



Neither dragon noticed. They were busy eyeing each other, scales rippling. The colours pulsed in their arched backs. Smoke trickled out of nostrils and ears. There was no reading the thoughts behind their glittering eyes.



Children hid behind their mothers' skirts. There would be no more thieving of wood or wheat.

But bakers still needed wood to heat their ovens, and winter nights are cold without logs for the fire. Woodsmen need bread and porridge, and growing children need milk.



From their rooftops, the people watched the dragons patrol. So exquisite, so exotic... so terrifying. As one walked West, the other ambled East, with only a thorn-hedge between them. (Naturally, each country thought its own dragon was the best.)