

# The Adventures of Cogs the Tinkerer

## Cogs and the Clockwork Prince

By: Sandy T Buck

Once upon a time in a kingdom far far away there lived a tinkerer named Cogsworth but everyone called him Cogs. He was an odd sort of fellow; not like all the other men. He was scrawny, with glasses, and curly red hair; all the maidens of the kingdom would laugh and tease him about his silly looks and curious ways. There was only one maiden; lovely and fair; the Princess Aricia who would not laugh or tease him but smiled instead. Cogs loved her for her kindness and thought to himself; "I will prove myself worthy and wed the Princess someday." Years passed and the kingdom of Gearium flourished making the King very wealthy. Unfortunately; the King's wealth attracted much unwanted attention from an ancient greedy dragon.

The kingdom of Gearium was a beautiful place with golden towers that glistened in the sun like diamonds. The kingdom stretched for miles through green forests, golden fields and a vast dark mountain range. The people of Gearium were happy and loved the King and his daughter the Princess Aricia. The King decided that for his daughter's birthday he would hold a festival in her honor. "Today is a glorious day" stated the King. "Today I am decreeing that he who is worthy shall have my daughter's hand in marriage. On the day of the festival a worthy suitor will be chosen."

The day of the festival came and Gearium was a sight to behold; golden tapestries hung from every window and everywhere there were sights and spectacles to behold. A line stretched from Gearium's gate to the castle's great hall; crowded with lords, knights, princes, and kings all vying for the princesses' hand in marriage. The line of suitors was long and crowded; each one of them had brought a gift for her majesty. Patiently standing in line; Cogs the Tinkerer was awaiting his turn to present his gift. "I present to you my lady, Cogs the Tinkerer of Gearium." Everyone in the crowd began to laugh as Cogs approached the Princess with his gift. "My lady, if it so pleases you; I would like to present you with your own one of a kind birthday cake." The Princess took the cake and looked at it quizzically; "what does it do?" She asked. Cogs took the cake and wound up a small key; the cake started to whirl, clink, squeak and clank. Then it opened up with a pop and out poured tiny clockwork doves. The laughter died and the crowd was awed into silence as the cake sputtered to a stop. The Princess looked at Cogs and said "Thank you for that most interesting gift; you may go now." Feeling the eyes of the entire kingdom upon him; Cogs turned looking defeated and trudged away from the Princess and the crowd with his head down.

The line of suitors stretched on into the night and the Princess grew tired. "My lady may I present to you; Lord Balaur." The Princess looked up in awe at the young lord with dark hair and golden eyes striding toward her. "My lady" he said as he made a sweeping bow; "your beauty is legendary." The Princess was enraptured by Lord Balaur. "Princess Aricia, I have not brought a gift but I do have something for you" said Lord Balaur as he grinned a sly smile at her. He placed a thin gold cord around the princesses neck and then turned to face the King. "Do you love your daughter more than your gold"

Lord Balaur asked. "Yes, I love my daughter more than all the gold in the world" answered the King. "Good" said Lord Balaur; "If you want your daughter back then you must pay tribute every new moon until all your wealth is gone. Once I have broken your kingdom; then and only then will you get your daughter back." Then to everyone's surprise there was a thunderous ripping sound and Lord Balaur's body began to transform. Big black leathery wings appeared then a long leathery spiked tail. Then with a great raucous wrenching sound the head of the beast appeared breathing fire at everyone close to him. Lord Balaur wound the gold cord around the princess; snatched her up and flew off into the night.

The King searched for his daughter and the dragon for weeks after the festival but to no avail. There were whispers in the kingdom that the King himself was cursed. As promised on the night before the new moon the dragon appeared above the castle breathing fire demanding tribute. "Lords and Ladies of Gearium hear me; bring your tribute up the mountain pass to the first cave you see; I will be there waiting for thee." The next day the King sent his tribute caravan up the mountain pass to deliver the gold. Late into the night, the caravan returned with word from the dragon he wanted more gold at the next new moon. This went on for several months until finally the King was mad with rage. His treasure was dwindling at a very fast pace. He sent out a decree far and wide stating that if any man rescued his daughter and defeated the dragon; they would be given the princesses hand in marriage.

Once again, suitors filled the castle walls all of them in shining armor and riding on splendid steeds. They boasted of how they would save the princess and slay the dragon. Each one rode up the mountain pass never to be seen or heard from again. As the days passed and the suitors dwindled; the kingdom was filled with the sounds of pounding, clicking and whirling as metal and gears were fitted together. The day before the next new moon; Cogs the Tinkerer strode into the castle and asked the king if his decree still stood. The king looked at Cogs and laughed and then shook his head. "Cogs, what makes you think you can defeat the dragon and save my daughter when all of these brave men could not?" Cogs just smiled and walked outside towards his horse and cart; "follow me" he shouted towards the King. The King stepped down off his throne and followed Cogs outside. "Dear King, under this cloth is our salvation; not only will it destroy the dragon but it will allow me to save the princess." "How is a bunch of gears stuck together going to do all that" asked the King. "You'll see" said Cogs and climbed up into his cart.

Cogs drove his horse and cart up the long mountain pass and up to the entrance of the cave. He threw back the cloth to reveal a bright, shiny, golden clockwork prince. Cogs wound the clockwork prince up and sent him into the cave and quietly followed behind. The shiny golden clockwork prince clicked, clacked, and whirled his way into the dragon's lair; while Cogs crept along the wall. On walked the clockwork prince whirling and clacking his way up to the dragon. The dragon watched as the clockwork prince clanked and clacked into his chamber and watched enthralled as the gears moved round and round. "What a curious creation" said the dragon "why however does it work?" As the dragon watched and pondered the clockwork prince; Cogs had crept very silently up to the princess's cage. He signaled the princess to be very quiet; then he gingerly slide the bolt back freeing her. The clicking, clacking, whirling noises were slowing down and Cogs knew his time was running out. He grabbed for the princess's hand and started running. They were almost to the entrance when they heard the dragon bellow "where is she?" and then the ground shook as the dragon lumbered out of his

chamber. "Don't stop running" yelled Cogs "we don't have much time." The cave went silent as the clockwork prince came to a stop; the dragon turned back to look at the curious shiny object. When all of a sudden there was a flash of light and the whooshing of air as the clockwork prince exploded.

Outside the cave stood the King and the entire kingdom curious to see if Cogs the Tinkerer would survive. As the ground shook and the smoke cleared; a gasp and then a great cry could be heard moving through the crowd. "It's the Princess; Cogs saved the Princess" was chanted over and over again. Cogs escorted the Princess up to the King and said "Sire I have done my part." The King in return placed his daughter's hand in Cogs and announced to his subjects in a loud voice that the two would be married on the morrow. The wedding was a glorious affair with people attending from far and wide; wishing the happy couple a very long and healthy life.....

And they lived happily ever after.....or did they?