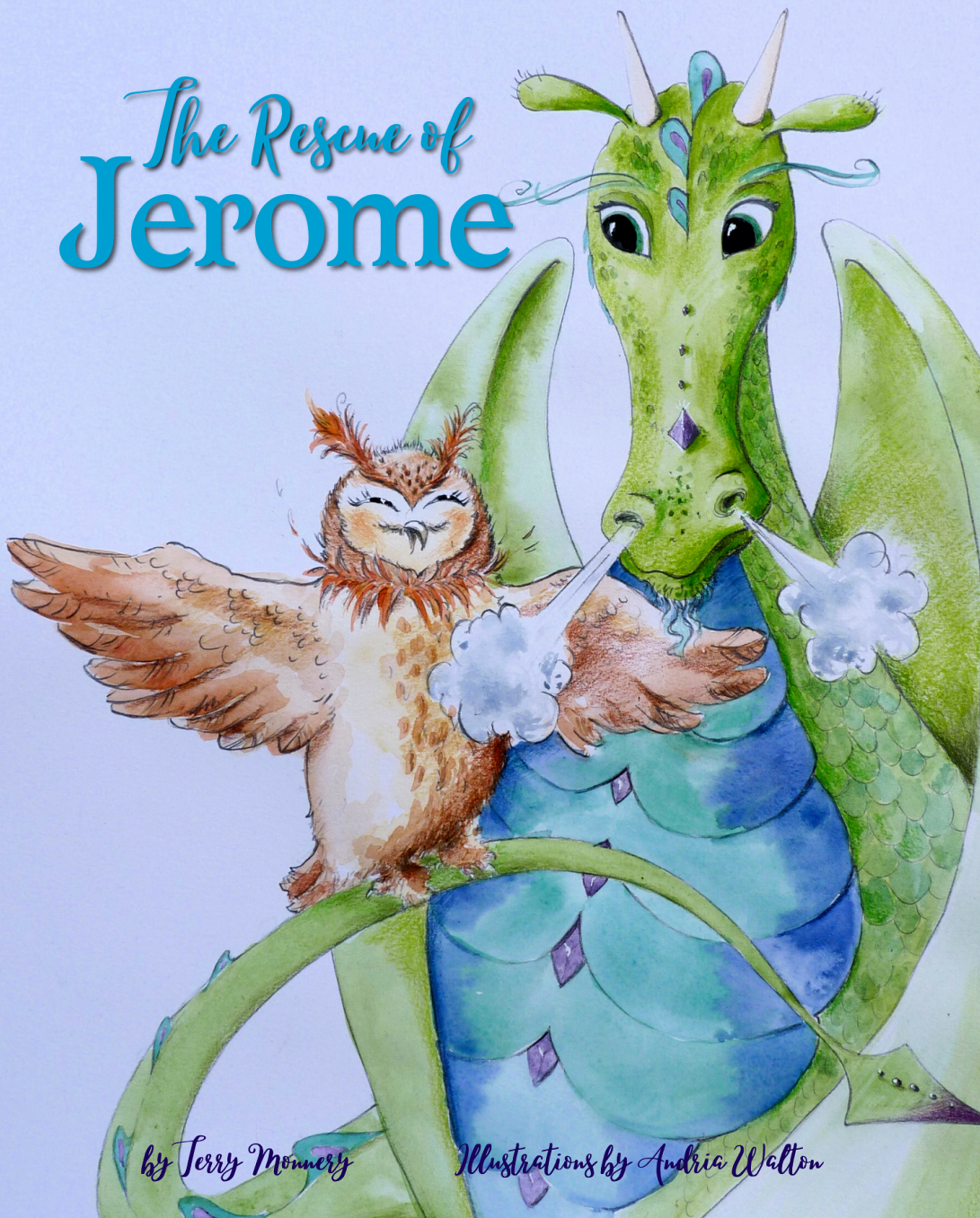




Adventures of Albert & Zens

The Rescue of Jerome



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The Rescue of Jerome

(helping others)

Albert fluffed up his shiny speckled owl feathers, let out a contented sigh, more of a hoot really and said "Being a magik animal is so amazing, wonderful and fantastic, don't you think Zeus?"

"Thinking is for the grown ups," replied Zeus "I just love playing and helping others." with that he had a small burp and let out a little flame surrounded by a puff of smoke.

"Do you dragons ever grow up?" chuckled Albert as he expertly avoided the flame. "Your dad's over 900 and you turn a 100 this year and you're still like a baby. We owls mature early, but I must admit I really enjoy it more when we play. Shall we go and find Isadora and see if she's got anything for us?"

"That's a good idea," replied Zeus. "Hop on and

we'll go and see if she is in her garden.”

Zeus waited for Albert to flutter on to his scaly back then with a couple of beats of his wings rose into the air and headed towards Isadora's nearby garden. They could see the beautiful variety of colours from the assorted plants and felt a warm thrill as they got closer and breathed in the soothing yet invigorating scents from the plants.

Zeus glided round until he spotted Isadora, a beautiful Phoenix with incredible plumage comprising many shades of blue, sitting serenely on a rock by the edge of a tinkling stream. He then swooped in and landed on the grassy knoll by the rock.

“Sorry for interrupting you Isadora.” said Albert.

“Yes,” said Zeus, “We hope it's ok to drop in like this, but we wondered if you had anything we

could do? You know, help children, teach the younger animals, the usual.”

“Albert and Zeus, it is so wonderful to have such a helpful pair as you around” Isadora beamed “and yes, you have come at a perfect time. I am sensing that there is a young elephant in distress in Africa and he could use your help. It will be a good opportunity for you to practice your skills and maybe even extend them, as I think this may be a challenge for you.”

She flicked her iridescent eyes and as she did so Albert and Zeus received all they needed to know about the situation and where this elephant was having it's troubles. They learned the elephant's name was Jerome.

“Off you go now boys and help Jerome.” she said, “and remember, be as loving as possible in all you do, use whatever magik is necessary and avoid doing any harm. I shall be keeping an eye on you,

just call if you need me.”

“Come on Albert, all aboard, let's go and do some rescuing!” cried Zeus

“Do you know where you are going Zeus? Africa is a big place.” said Albert

“Oh I couldn't show you on a map,” replied Zeus
“but one of the things I can do is be wherever I need to be. When I'm in the air I imagine wherever I want to be. and there's like a pzzzzkt! sound and next thing you know, I'm over where I imagined. It takes no time at all.”

“Come on then, we'd better get a move on” said Albert as he hopped on to Zeus's back.

Zeus took off into the sky “Hold tight!” he shouted to Albert, who gripped the scales on Zeus's back with his claws just before ..Pzzzzkt! and they

disappeared.

"I'm in trouble now." muttered Jerome as he awoke with a start and recalled where he was and the situation he was in.

"Why are you in trouble?" asked the calm voice inside his head

"Look at the mess I'm in! How can I not be in trouble?" Jerome trumpeted

"Come on be sensible," ordered the calm voice, "let's look at the mess you're in and see what we can do."

"I'm laying here on my side, stuck in this horrible mud pool and I can't move."

"That's not quite true." said the voice in Jerome's head "You can move most parts of you body, but

not much. Except your trunk of course.”

“Oh that is being really picky.” muttered Jerome.

“Yes I can move things but every time I move something, like my leg, I sink deeper into the mud.”

“Could you not swim out?” asked the voice.

“I don't know whether you noticed, but I'm laying on my side, what style of swimming do you suggest I use? elephant side stroke? Oh I forgot, I never learned that one, I'll ask my mum to teach me if I ever see her again.” grumbled an unhappy Jerome “Why am I even talking to you?”

“You're talking to me because you're here, all alone with very little chance of being rescued. Your herd are probably thinking you've gone off exploring, as you frequently do and will join them later. You have absolutely no idea what will happen

next, so I'm bringing you some comfort in your hour of need."

"I don't need comfort I need rescuing!" exclaimed Jerome.

As he lay there in the mud, feeling sorry for himself, his thoughts turned to how he got to be in such a mess.

His day had started when the big red sun rose above the horizon, heralding another hot sunny day in his part of Africa. He was with the rest of his brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins and his parents who made up the herd. He was still young, but growing fast and was almost as big as his mother. The herd spent the morning wandering through the scrub as the day warmed up. By noon, with a hot sun overhead, they arrived at the watering hole. The herd gleefully waded into the water, filling their trunks and showering their backs

with cooling water. Jerome did likewise and occasionally sprayed his little sister who squealed with delight.

Ever curious, Jerome went exploring and came across a perfect pool of cooling mud. He used his trunk to spread it thickly all over his back.

“Oh this is bliss” he crooned to himself and closed his eyes to better enjoy the sense of well being his mud bath gave him.

With the warmth of the sun and his feeling of contentment he soon dozed off where he stood.

After a few minutes he started snoring, making little trumpeting noises through his trunk.

He awoke with a start. There was no noise from the rest of the herd, they must have left and not told him. He jerked into action and promptly fell

over on his side into the mud.

He scrabbled and rocked and shouted and tried to push himself up, but he couldn't seem to sort his legs out and get himself into a standing position.

He was rudely brought back to the now when he heard a familiar voice.

"You look to be in trouble again Jerome," cawed Billy the scavenging vulture "maybe you'll end up as our dinner this time. All your family have disappeared and you're trapped. All we have to do is sit and wait. I believe the lions are hungry and on the hunt, not long before they find you and then..."

Jerome shuddered at the thought and with a bravado he certainly didn't feel said "Go away Billy, I am not going to be your dinner or that of any lion, just wait and see."

Jerome felt scared and vulnerable. He turned his head around to see who was there, all he could see was Billy with his fellow vultures. Jerome then looked into the sky and saw a dark smudge that he noted was heading his way.

“Oh no I hope it's not more of Billy's friends.” he thought and tried even harder to get himself out the mud, but sadly without success.

“Oh! What am I going to do?” he thought tearfully.

Suddenly a cloud passed in front of his eyes and a voice enquired “Are you Jerome?”

Jerome looked up seeing a scaly face, flared nostrils and blue piercing eyes.

“Yes I..I..I'm Jerome, h..h..how do you know? Wh..wh..who are you?” stammered Jerome, feeling even more frightened and vulnerable.

“Hey it's me talking to you,” said Albert as he flew on to the top of Zeus's head from his back, “not this great lump.”

“Who you calling a great lump?” Exclaimed Zeus swinging his head around trying to talk to Albert. With this sudden movement Albert lost his footing on Zeus and fell into the mud, with a sploosh.

Zeus roared with laughter at Albert's predicament, sending smoke and flames in all directions scaring off Billy and his vultures and nearly singeing Alberts very muddy feathers.

Jerome used his trunk to lift Albert back on to Zeus, who was still quivering with laughter.

Pulling himself up and trying to look dignified despite his very muddied feathers, Albert said to Jerome.

"We are here to rescue you Jerome."

Jerome looked at this small mud covered bird, gave a sigh and replied "how on earth is a little thing like you and this bumbling fiery monster going to rescue me?"

"We have magik powers Jerome, we'll find a way." said Albert in his haughtiest voice.

"Have you got any ideas how we can do this?" whispered Zeus into Albert's ear.

"Not yet." replied Albert.

"How about if you grab Jerome's ears with your claws and fly him out." suggested Albert.

"We can give it a go" said Zeus "but he's quite big and heavy."

Albert explained to Jerome what they intended to do.

"Mmm, I'm not too sure that will work." said Jerome "I've never been lifted by my ears and I'm not sure they're strong enough."

"How about if you grab my feet with your trunk!" exclaimed Zeus, "if it hurts too much you can let go."

"That sounds much better." said Jerome, who had perked up at the idea of rescue.

Zeus beat his wings and hovered over Jerome.

"Grab my feet." yelled Zeus and almost instantly felt the grip of Jerome's trunk.

Zeus frantically beat his wings and tried to rise in the air. No matter how hard he tried, the suction of

the mud holding Jerome was too strong and Jerome remained firmly stuck.

Dejected, Jerome let go of Zeus's feet and sank back into the mud.

Zeus and Albert huddled together. "Isadora mentioned about using magik." said Zeus.

"What magik have we got that we can use?" asked Albert. "Making things invisible isn't much help, Jerome doesn't know the *imagining* thing to escape. How about trying something like teleportation? We could move him from the mudpit on to dry land that way."

"That sounds a good idea" said Zeus "let's give it a go"

They went and explained to Jerome what they were going to try.

"You mean you intend to move a lump like me on to dry land just using your power of thought," said Jerome "no one does that, you're having a laugh."

"Never mind," said Albert, "that's what we'll do."

Albert and Zeus got as close to Jerome as they could.

"Are you ready?" said Albert.

"Ok." said Zeus.

They both focused on the form of Jerome, becoming one with him in their minds. Then they visualised the figure of Jerome rising. Albert and Zeus were new to teleportation and had only practiced a few times before. Initially it was difficult for them to keep their minds focused on the task in hand. As a consequence Jerome felt very peculiar. He rose a bit...., sank a bit....,

wobbled a bit..., tilted this way..., tilted that way..., but little by little he rose out of the mud.

“How on earth is this happening?” he wondered, but was grateful that it was.

Jerome's face was full of awe and surprise as he slowly rose out of the mud. He let out a loud trumpet of delight. This caused Albert and Zeus to lose their focus, causing Jerome to drop back down into the mudpit, sending fountains of mud in all directions.

A very muddy Albert appeared in front of Jeromes eyes and said in a stern voice, “Jerome, please try and remain calm so you don't distract us, or we'll never get you out of here.”

“Sorry” whispered Jerome “I was so amazed. Can you do it again.....pleeease”

They all settled into their focused mode. Jerome kept very quiet. Little by little he rose, steadily this time, no wobbles or dips but a smooth lift.

Jerome felt his body come clear of the mud and be swung around to be deposited on the ground next to the water hole.

“Wow! this is amazing” thought Jerome wanting to trumpet his delight but thinking it would be better to remain silent, “Maybe I can get them to teach me.” he mused.

“No we can't teach you.” said Albert, as if reading Jerome's mind “You have to learn to look after yourself properly and think of others as well.”

Jerome felt so relieved having escaped the mudpit and thanked them by giving them hugs with his long trunk. He then realised his plight was not finished. He had no idea where the rest of the herd

was, but he needed to rejoin them because they were his family.

"It's fantastic being free of the mud, but how am I going to find my family?" He asked anyone who'd listen.

"Ah, that's easy for me" said Zeus "I can fly. I'll just go and have a look. Any ideas which direction they may have gone Jerome?"

"We normally head for the mountains in the afternoon." replied Jerome swinging his head in the direction of the afternoon sun and using his trunk to indicate some mountains in the distance.

"OK, I'll go and have a look." said Zeus and rose into the air and headed towards the mountains.

Jerome and Albert sat on the ground resting quietly.

"This has been quite a day" said Jerome "I don't know what to make of it."

"Make what you want." said Albert "but remember that we all have guardian Angels looking after us and all you need do is ask for their help and know they are coming."

"That sounds so simple." said Jerome.

"That's because it is." replied Albert.

A shadow flashed across them and with a rush of air Zeus landed.

"You're in luck Jerome," said Zeus "your herd hasn't gone far and if we set off now you can quickly catch them up."

"Oh yes please," trumpeted an excited Jerome "which way?"

"Follow me." said Zeus "Come on Albert, get on board but I don't want that mud all over me or I'll tip you off." he chuckled.

Albert gave a vigorous shake, spreading dried mud everywhere, then hopped on to Zeus's back. With that, Zeus beat his wings, climbed into the air and headed in the direction of Jerome's herd.

He set a leisurely pace for Jerome to follow. It didn't take long for them to catch up with herd.

Jerome trotted happily up to his mother and gave her a loving nudge.

"Where have you been Jerome?" said his mother when she saw him. "I've been worried about you, no one knew where you were and I was wondering what to do."

"I've been having an adventure with magik

animals.” replied Jerome “They saved my life.”

“Oh don't be silly,” chided his mother, “there's no such thing as magik animals.”

Albert and Zeus hovered invisibly overhead.

“One day they'll learn.” said Zeus.

“Ooh yes.” replied Albert.

After a moments silence he continued, “I suppose we'd better get back and tell Isadora how it went.”

Next moment there was a pzzzzkt! and Isadora appeared.

“You have no need to tell me anything, I saw it all. You two have done so well” she said “I am so proud of what you did and how you did it, thank you from me and from Jerome.”

“Now it's time to go home and play.” she said,
dipping her wing and swinging to the north, before
disappearing with a Pzzzkt!

Zeus and Albert quickly followed.

Pzzzkt!

The End