

Grandiflax of Raby Castle

by Georgina Ellis

As I wandered through the parkland, I saw the outline of Raby Castle in the distance its turrets scraping the sky. My feet felt around nature's mossy trampoline with every giant step. I spotted a herd of deer ahead and they spooked in my presence, darting off into the bushes. Among the canopies of trees above birds tweeted and blossom fell like snow. The smell of new shoots filled my nose as I galloped still further, I knew this place like the back of my talon.

Then a flash, a shadow, a whisper and I thought I heard a voice. I shook my head and continued to sprint along. After a minute I heard it again, I realized that it was real as I heard it a third time and it was calling my name! I knew only one person could call me like this and I decided that I should go and help him, wherever he was. I stretched my enormous wings and began beating them, slowly at first then getting quicker, I took one great leap and rocketed up into the crystal blue sky over the Castle's gatehouse.

I flew for a few minutes hearing the call getting louder and more urgent until I found where I needed to be, as far below, a tall person was calling my name over and over. I nosedived and elegantly landed on the ground. The man had brown curly hair, glasses and blue eyes. Just like when he and I were hatchlets. I said to him, "It is I, Grandiflax the great." And with an urgent tone in his voice he told me that his daughter had got her foot stuck under a tree root and she couldn't get it free. He showed me to the ancient tree, with holes and knots in the bark that looked like evil eyes which seemed to watch my every move.

Behind the tree I could see a young girl struggling to pull herself free from the wicked tree's grasp. Her dad reassured "It's ok you'll be free soon" and I immediately strode to where she stood, scrabbling to get a grip on the slippery bark. It had just rained, and every inch of the area was soggy and damp – typical Britain. I told her to turn around and when she realized I was a dragon she screamed and backed off as far as she could. I could see the fear pulsing through her veins. With a lot of coaxing she reluctantly allowed me to sink my teeth into the root and with a wrench and a heave, the root gave way, freeing the girl.

The child ran toward her father and, after giving him a hug, she turned to me and gently touched her head to mine, saying "I thank you greatly, is there anything I could do for you?" I replied truthfully "Just keep my existence here a secret" And then we parted. They headed south and I back to the Castle.