

Rufus

Once upon a time, there lived a great dragon in the woods just west of the Fremont Auto Mall. The dragon was known by a few locals as "Rufus, the yapper" because when he tried to roar, he sounded more like a constipated daschund. Rufus was very fond of snacking on the occasional car shopper who, distractedly, ventured out of the mall as they pondered the color of their next SUV. He particularly enjoyed it when he had time to prepare his snack using his family's famous flambé recipe that had been handed down for generations from mouth to mouth.

Rufus had dwelled in the woods for centuries. He had seen so much change over time. At first, he did not like the mall, but when it turned out to be such a consistent source of nourishment, he decided that change was not all bad. With time, he became very lazy and complacent: eventually he forgot how to fly. He would just amble over to the back of the mall, trying to not look too conspicuous. He tried disguise on some days, but his luminous green wings were not too convincing for an angel. Also, he did not realize that an angel was not a common sight outside an auto mall. At times, he had to hang out by the dumpsters for hours before lunch walked out into the parking lot. He would roar and the shopper would look around expecting to see a sickly dog, but it was not.....

The loss of clients who were last seen contemplating their future car's color became an issue for the dealerships. After many hours of fraught discussion, the owners decided to remove the choice of color as an option for their clients. They only ordered white cars from the manufacturers. A few weeks later, the parking lots for new cars were seas of pristine white. When Rufus saw them, it seemed to awaken something primordial within his tiny monster heart. The notion of untainted and unused, and all in white seemed to arouse his basic instincts. It also seemed to bring about a more hearty appetite.

One night, he ventured in with the shiny new cars. Intoxicatedly, he grabbed a small and delicate looking sports coupe. He sniffed at it and then took a substantial bite from its front wing. He sensed the coupe shudder momentarily before fainting limply in his arms. He took more bites as sweet smelling oil dripped down his arms. He felt satiated and vowed to cut out those annoying little snacks.

The dealership owners soon became aware that cars were disappearing, with only a small puddle of oil and a few scattered car morsels to indicate that a car had ever stood in the spot. More disturbing was the viscous drool that hung from the morsels. It had an odor that could only be compared to what emanates from a constipated daschund, when after three weeks of non-movement it explodes.

Vanishing automobiles were not good for business, but it was preferable to vanishing customers. However, the insurance companies took a dim actuarial attitude towards the constant stream of claims. They decided to send a crack team of investigators to look into the matter. To most people, the team blended in as other shoppers and the occasional homeless person. But they kept a constant vigil around the mall. One night

the homeless guy was pushing his shopping cart around the edge of the parking lots when he spotted some strange movements in the nearby woods. To say that the sight of a hungry dragon dressed as an angel was disturbing to anyone would be valid, but perhaps to someone on crack it was re-assuringly normal. Let's assume that the homeless man was not on crack because he called the rest of the team as he knew they would not believe him in the morning.

The group sheltered in the shadows of the dumpsters watching Rufus devour a large sedan. As he finished it, Rufus let out a low rumbling belch that had local shipping turning circles fearing they were lost and about to hit some rocks, despite it being a clear night. The team watched in fascination as the dragon meandered back towards the woods: then they followed at a safe distance. They had plans for Rufus. But how were they to get him back to Brentwood where he could easily lift any car while the rest of the team changed the tire?

To be continued possibly.....