



Winter Dragon

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A late Spring storm has swirled in and laid out drifts galore. Sunshine sparkles the snow and makes for a brilliant day. I'm happy for one last chance to try my luck with the snow-blower. So far this season, mastery of the mighty beast has eluded me.

The snow blower is like a winter dragon that lets fly stinky, flatulent fumes from one orifice. From its snout shoots a great sluice of snow. Its roaring never ceases. I'm small, five-foot-two, one hundred and twenty-five pounds. The snow blower weighs one-hundred and fifty pounds, is a huge hulk, heavy to manoeuvre. Still, I'm undaunted and up to the challenge.

In the garage, I start up the engine and get out onto the driveway. I point the dragon towards the street, grab the 'reigns,' 'crack the whip' and we're off, but immediately there's trouble. A mighty wind is blowing and snow is shooting from his gaping gullet back onto me and into the open door of the garage. I'm okay. I have goggles, gloves and good winter gear. But the garage now has a dump of snow in it. I'll have to dig it all out later. I stop the beast, go into the garage, shut the big main door and try to shake off this unfortunate start to the day. You'd think the dragon with all his mighty blasting force could blow against the wind. Huh!

We continue to labour up and down the driveway at quite a pace, me hanging on leaning back like a plowman in a field pulled along by the oxen. At each turn my heart pounds and I'm sure my blood pressure rises as I frantically manoeuvre to both turn the huge beast and adjust the

spewing snout at the same time. Somehow I manage to complete our driveway and if that hasn't been challenge enough, I decide to do my neighbour's as well.

As we trot down the sidewalk, I notice clods of black earth and frozen grass flying onto the white snow. Bloody hell! He's edging the lawn as well as plowing the snow. I quickly steer him down the middle of the sidewalk. Ever the optimist, I reflect that there will be one less job in Spring, until I see that he hasn't cut a straight line. Now, I'm thoroughly annoyed. But what can I do? I'll assess the damage in Spring. Thank goodness it's our lawn and not the neighbours.

On my neighbour's driveway, the process continues as wildly as before. Up and down we go until the last pass down. Suddenly my feet shoot out from under me, bum on hard ice. That dragon just keeps going like a runaway team.

"Stop! Stop," I yell, but language is useless with this wretched beast. I slide on and on until I remember to let go. Like all problems, 'letting go' solves it. The animal abruptly halts. I get up slowly, with a sore tailbone and bruised pride.

On the way home, my dragon behaves better than he has all day. I suddenly remember the old axiom about slow and steady. We *walk* down the centre of the sidewalk, not at all in a rush to get back to the stable even though hot chocolate will be served, for me anyway. My dragon will sleep now, hibernate for the summer. But I'm sure that next winter with a little tune-up, he'll be rumbling and snorting for action. I'll remember that it's okay to *walk* on a sunny winter's day.