

Sabrian Mowder

Age 12

Hamlin Middle School

Virtue. That was his name. He had been mine since I was three years old. Virtue was covered in dark green scales with a spiral of light green scales from his neck to the tip of his tail. Virtue was a stuffed dragon.

Before school, every day, I would set him in a stalking position on my pillow. When I came home, I would do my homework as quick as possible, put my things away, and then immediately start playing and talking to him.

One warm afternoon in May, I came home to find Virtue missing. I searched frantically for my friend all around the house, moving everything possible, looking everywhere I could. Finally, about an hour later, I found him. The odd thing was, he was in the backyard and he was much bigger! Ten men standing on each others shoulders could fit; snout to tail. I gasped dramatically and ran behind a nearby tree, narrowly escaping his deep, curious gaze. He briefly stretched out his wings; revealing the sheer, green skin stretching across his wing. Then, he stood and disappeared. I sprinted to my room and found him back in the spot that I left him in. I didn't see him like that again until three months later.

It was the middle of August, and I had just come home from a camping trip in Salem. I just finished doing my chores and was unpacking my things, when I heard the sound of gargantuan wings. It was then that I noticed Virtue was missing. I leaped outside, remembering the last time I had

found him outside. He saw me this time, and his huge, dark yellow eyes, fixed on me. He must of seen the awe and disbelief in my expression because he asked me, "Would you like a ride?" I kept staring in amazement. He said again, "Would you like a ride?" I stuttered an answer, "S-s-sure. I-I guess s-so."

I climbed onto his scaly back and held tight to his neck as he made a slight leap and flapped his wings. I felt the wind whipping my hair into my face, the cold air stinging my skin, as Virtue performed loop-the-loops, dives, and created shapes in the air.

When we landed in the backyard again, I stumbled off of his back and staggered to my room. I stole a glance at my clock on the nightstand. It read five-thirty. I tried my best to walk calmly to the kitchen to start on dinner. I rolled the thought over and over again in my brain, debating whether to believe it or not. I decided to believe it, since my bags were still unpacked.

Now, a few times a year, I take a ride on Virtues back. After all, he has been mine for nine years.