

*This Unit 3 Variation by a middle school student is also a sequel. Brent enjoyed his characters from his retelling of "The Lion and the Shepherd" so much that he used them again in this retelling of "The Merchant and His Donkey."*

Brent

### Leaps and Bounds

A cool breeze quickly rushed through the trees in the Jungle of Misery. A knight and his dragon suddenly soared to the ground and landed in a heap. Frantically looking back, the Knight remembered all that had happened. Exciting memories swept through his mind as he remembered the castle, now in enormous ruins, as if in a dream. Hopelessly pinned down underneath those ruins was the foolish King, who had so furiously tried to kill them both. Because they feared for their lives, they wanted to build a new home far from the King.

Anxiously grabbing the Dragon, whom he had now named Toothless, the Knight hurriedly got up off the ground. Toothless and the Knight bolted to the nearest tree. The Knight intently took his sword and with one huge crushing blow, sunk it deep into the tree. Because the tree started to briskly fall to the ground, Toothless closed his eyes in fear and felt the ground shake with a thundering bang. The Knight then carefully cut the enormous tree with the sharp blade of his sword and loaded some of the rough wood into the sling which hung around Toothless's neck. They carefully set off. Where they were going they did not know.

After a few minutes of calmly walking, a fly buzzed into Toothless' nose, and he let out a fairly loud sneeze. When fire exploded out of his mouth, the wood the Knight so briskly cut for them burned up in flames. Toothless, realizing his load was lighter, jumped for joy. The next few loads Toothless sneezed on purpose. The frustrated Knight became very suspicious.

Trudging once more back to the tree, the Knight crossly loaded Toothless up with more wood. As he did so, the Knight remembered some gunpowder a Chinese merchant had given him. Nonchalantly taking it out of the little wrinkled sack around his neck, he sprinkled a good

amount onto the wood which was in Toothless' sling. After miles of walking, the cunning Toothless began to sneeze once again. As he did, fire came out of his mouth and hit the gunpowder, which made it ignite with an ear splitting BANG. Toothless was shot into the air, confused and disoriented. Because he landed on the ground with such a thud, his dragon hind quarters were sore for days to come. As the wounded Dragon hobbled over to him, the pleased knight suddenly felt sorry for him, embracing the chastened Dragon as he fell at his feet. The repentant Dragon sorrowfully licked the Knight's cheek with regret in his heart, and in the next few days as they worked to build their mansion, their friendship grew by leaps and bounds.