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## THE DRAGON

In the recent past, Eastman residents began noticing that parts of its cultural heritage were disappearing: the sundial from Parc du temps qui passe [as-time-goes-by park], a short stretch of rail from Mr. Sweet's property and the white cross on Chemin des Diligences, among others – all gone! No leads had come up to explain these strange thefts, much to the villagers' consternation.

One man in particular, the village soap maker, was worried. He wouldn't find it a bit funny if his cast iron cauldron or Bath Gnomes disappeared. He had no choice. The soap works had to be protected. That very night, he heard the impressive flap of strong wings cutting the air and saw flames lighting up the sky like lightning. Looking up, the soap maker saw a magnificent yellow and red dragon twirling through the air. The noble beast roared in discontent, snorting nervously, searching for something to appease the perpetually gnawing hunger that burned in him. In vain.

The following day, tormented by the events of the previous night, the soap maker went down to the village. He told everyone that he had seen a dragon with his own eyes and warned that it was almost certain to return. But no one believed a word of it! So the soap maker returned home, resigned to mount guard alone.

His senses on high alert that night, he heard the sound of voices coming from his soap cellar. In his flashlight beam, he could make out red caps. It was the Gnomes! They were cheerfully filling bags, selecting only the coriander and bergamot soaps. He crept closer and things became clear. The Gnomes were stocking up on soaps to feed the dragon. The following night, the Soap maker had a plan. He made a batch of "Special Reserve" soaps, left them out, then went to hide. Soon, the dragon returned, and its furiously sniffing fiery nostrils led it straight to the source of the smell. It greedily gulped down every one of the soaps. The fresh, uncurd soap was still caustic and the effect was almost immediate. The dragon was soon writhing in horrible stomach cramps. It tried to fly off, but each with new cramp, blinding flames cut through the night.

At that moment, the soap maker left his hiding spot and called to the Dragon to make a deal with him. He made it promise to stop stealing historic objects. In exchange, he would supply it with harmless soap. The sick monster accepted with gratitude.

And that is why some evenings in Eastman the smells of coriander and bergamot float on the breeze.