

Dragon Tears

By Steve Heron

For Jasmine - (From one chispa to another)

Illustration suggestion: Double page map in the centre or on the inside cover (end pages) of the book showing Spain; the Pyrenees Mountains; the two islands, Manorca and Mallorca in the Mediterranean; the Villages of Palma and Porto Christo; the Black and White caves of Drach; the Templar's Treasure; information about Cauchador the Real; and Flecha De Fuego (the Arrow of Fire).

Other components can be added in the illustrations, e.g. an illustration of how a 'Chispa' in a dragon's throat works to light their flame and other environmental components.

When a dragon loses their chispa, their power is hidden.

On the Spanish island of Menorca lived a flight of noble dragons.

Amongst them was a fledgeling named Flame who was unable to breathe fire.

Fire-breathing dragons need their chispa, their spark, to ignite their flame.

Flame lost the power of her chispa the day her father left on a quest to help bring peace to the mountain shires. She missed her father more than the night would miss the stars.

The other young dragons teased, calling her names, like Flameless and Fizzle. And never played the games she wanted to play.

It worried Flame's mother that she didn't have her spark and couldn't make friends.

One day while wandering in the forest, trying her hardest to breathe fire, Flame came across a dragon called The Arrow of Fire.

His voice blazed, 'For a dragon to have tears, something must be very wrong.'

Startled, Flame replied, 'But I don't have tears.'

'Not ones you can see. It's your hidden tears that are destroying the power of your chispa.'

'How can I stop the tears and regain my power?' Flame asked.

'Cauchador the Royal Emperor, guardian of the Templar Treasures in the Caves of Drach, is the one to see. You will find him in the White Cave on the island of Mallorca, a half day's flight over the treacherous sea.'

Flame was desperate to breathe fire, so she set out on the perilous journey to the island. As she flew high in the storm clouds, lightning and thunder threatened her, forcing her to fly just above the waves as they leapt at her like tongues, trying to pull her into the sea.

She mustered all her strength and made it to the island.

As she approached the entrance to the White Cave, the heat of a dragon's breath overcame her. A voice like an earthquake rumbled, 'What causes the sadness I see in your eyes?'

Flame trembled as the mighty dragon emerged, his voice changed to the sound of distant thunder, '*Has perdido tu chispa?*'

Flame quivered, 'S ... s ... si, I have lost my spark.'

'Why has your chispa lost its power?'

'I ... I miss my father.'

'Hmmm ... Many young dragons miss their fathers but have found the courage to spark.'

Flame's chin dropped. 'Mighty Cauchador, what shall I do?'

The magnificent dragon lifted his head. 'I want you to venture into the furthest cavern of the Black Cave. There you will find hidden treasure. In the centre stands the Goblet del Cristal.'

'B.. b.. b.. but the Black Cave is dark and terrifying.'

‘Indeed. You will need courage young one.’

‘But I’m scared, not brave.’

Cauchador nodded his head. ‘Courage cannot exist without fear.’

For the first time in ages, tears welled in Flame’s eyes as the wise dragon added, ‘When you find the goblet, drop one tear from each eye into it. The tears will turn into a crystal. Wear the crystal around your neck to restore the power of your chispa.’

‘How will I know it works?’ Flame asked.

‘My word is enough.’ Cauchador’s voice boomed as he pointed to the Black cave’s opening.

Flame’s heart pounded as she entered the darkness. The deeper she ventured, the deeper her fear grew. She called for help. There was no answer, only black silence. In the depths of the cave, her fear and her sadness joined forces, and she slumped to the ground.

A tear escaped her eye and trickled over her cheek, giving off a soft glow as it hit the cave floor. More tears cascaded, and the glow became brighter, enough to show the hidden treasure. Flame spotted the goblet in the middle. She grasped the goblet, squeezed her eyes and let one tear from each fall into it.

A deafening rumble shook the cave. Flame dropped the goblet as she toppled to the cave floor where she lay in darkness ... ‘What now?’

Silvery shards of light with the colours of fire erupted from the goblet as a crystal necklace tumbled out. Flame’s hope grew as she reached for the necklace and put it on as she lifted herself up.

A welcome warmth grew in her throat. She opened her mouth and roared. A spatter of sparks, then a flame. Her chispa had recovered its power.

Using the light of her flame she found her way back to the entrance to thank the mighty dragon, but he had left.

She journeyed over the treacherous sea back home where she saw the young dragons playing.

‘Hey look it’s Flameless.’ One of them teased as she landed.

‘Where’ve you been Fizzle?’ Another laughed.

From deep in her throat a roar bellowed. Her chispa ignited, and a fearsome flare of fire filled the air. The other dragons fell back in amazement that Flame had regained the power to breathe fire.

From that day on they let her join in, often playing the games she wanted to play.

When she missed her father, the Crystal helped her find the courage to spark.

Sometimes she still liked to play on her own.

END