

**A STORY ABOUT DRAGON CORONIUS,
AND HOW EVERYONE BEAT HIM TOGETHER**



Once upon a time, there was a kingdom. And as did everyone in that kingdom, little Johnny and his sister Lizzy lived in peace and harmony.



Every morning their mommy would make them breakfast, and their daddy would drive them to school, where they would pay special attention to what their teacher taught them about, numbers, letters, rivers and animals. The latter, they found the most interesting, because they both absolutely adored animals!

At home they had a little dog, named Fluffy. Each day, as they returned from school, they would take Fluffy on a walk through the park, they would toss some sticks about and Fluffy would chase after them. After their walk they would go home to finish their homework, and after that they would once more set out for some fun with all their friends. Sometimes they would play hide and seek, or chase each other, or just play with a ball. And sometimes Fluffy would steal their ball, and when they tried getting it back, he would playfully bark at them.

When the weather outside was very pleasant they would go to the zoo with their parents, because they loved how funny the penguins walked, and they would also always check out the

many shenanigans the monkeys were pulling.



Wednesday afternoons were a bit different, though. On Wednesdays mommy would take Johnny to his piano practice, and Lizzy to her dancing class. And every time it rained, and they were therefore unable to play outside, they would make up a special performance for mommy and daddy. Their parents would always give them the biggest applause imaginable to mankind and in return for the show, read them their favorite stories. For example Hansel and Gretel, which was, by the way, their favorite story at the time. (They liked being a bit scared every time they heard it!)

To be honest, life with those two wasn't always sunshine and rainbows, as they weren't always perfectly good. Sometimes they would fight over which one of them should clean their room, or who would get the shoe in Monopoly. But it was quite alright, as all children sometimes misbehave, and here's a little secret; sometimes even mommies and daddies misbehave and fight! But the most important thing is that, eventually they all make up and they still love each other!

Each and every Sunday, all four of them would visit grandma

and grandpa. Fluffy had to stay at home, because he kept growling at grandma's cat Albert, and in return Albert would angrily hiss back at Fluffy.

After lunch daddy and grandpa drank their coffee and talked about the news and other important things, while the rest of them usually went on a walk around a nearby pond. They would throw dry bread and peas to all the fish and ducks. And on their walk back home, they would always stop at a candy store, where it always smelled like vanilla, and where they had so many sweets and goodies, that it was almost impossible to choose, which one you wanted to take.

So this is how they all lived and loved each other.

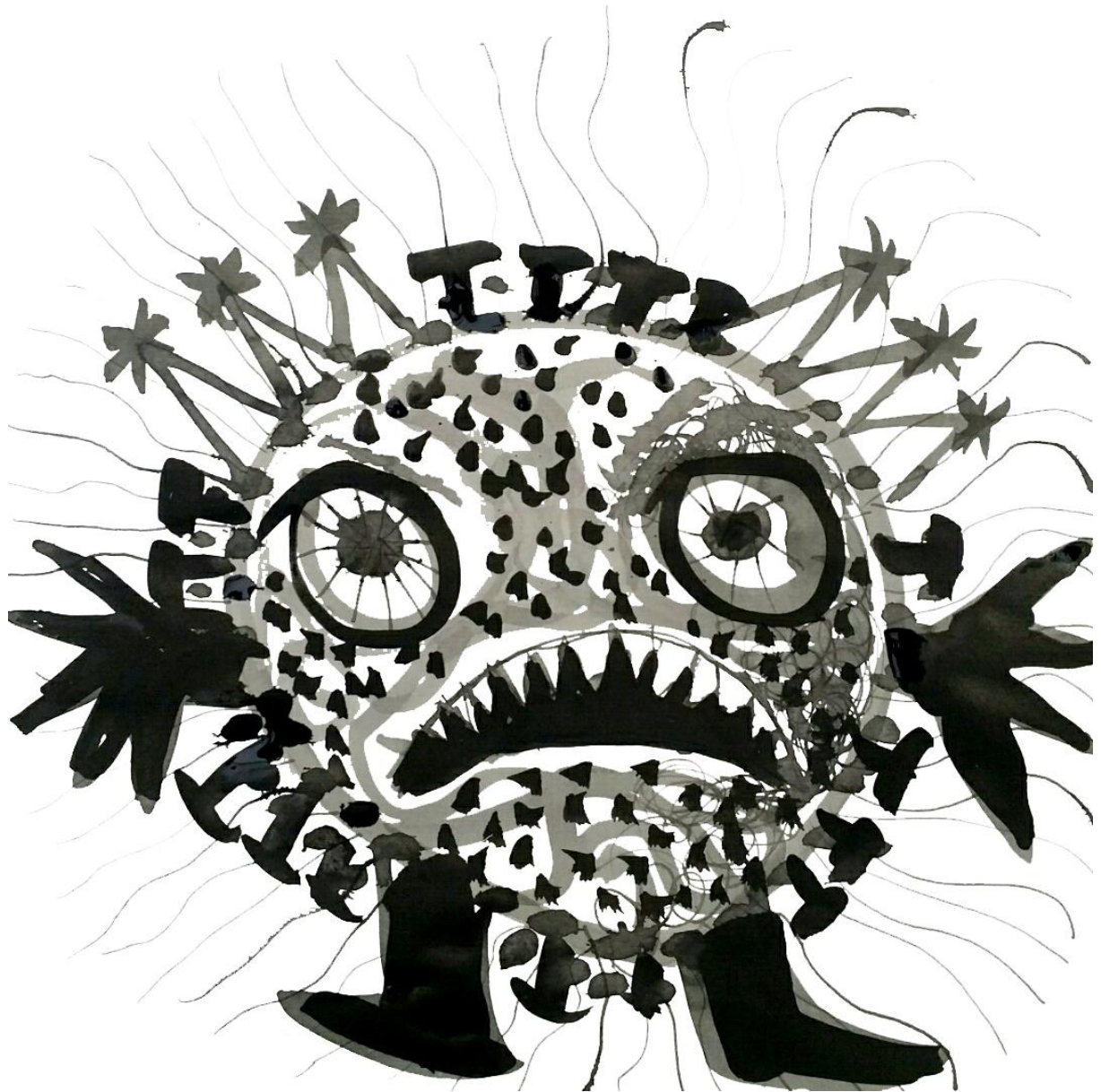


But one day their kingdom was attacked by an evil, nasty king Coronius from a far Eastern land!



No one knew why he came and how he dared do such a thing. He was a dragon, on his head lay an awfully strange crown, decorated by bats' feet and snakes' tails, and what's worse is that with him came a huge army of Virusants!

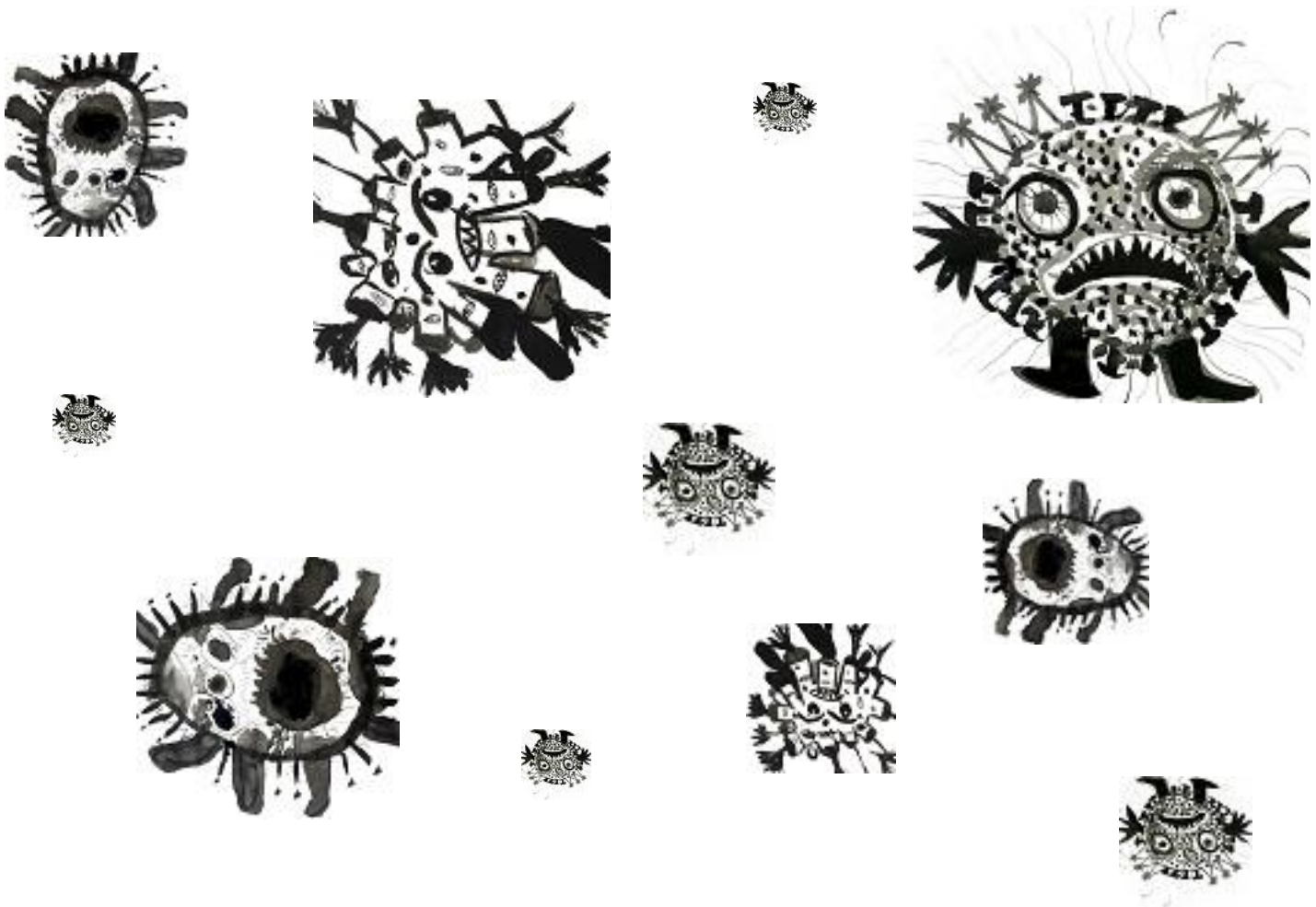
Together they conquered the kingdom, and overthrew the peaceful leadership. They closed down the borders, so no one could enter or leave, and Coronius crowned himself the new leader of the kingdom. Virusants were a ghastly bunch, bodies strewn with warts, their noses runny, and instead of arms, they had lithe tentacles. Absolutely horrendous!

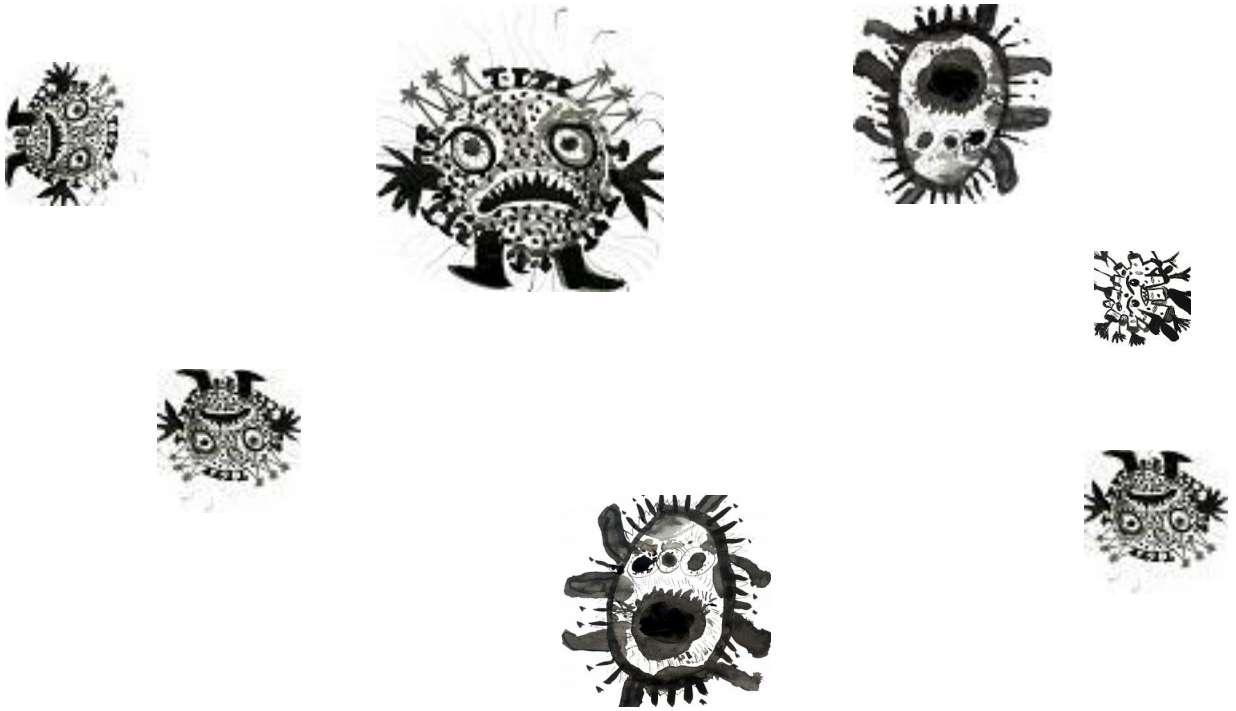


And if that wasn't enough, they also reeked, ew! Imagine a rotten egg, stinky, old hot dog, a skunk's fart, shoe polish and flea shampoo - if you combined all of those smelly catastrophes together, it would still smell better than those ghastly Virusants.

Their odor filled everyone's nostrils and they all started coughing. They were coughing so hard their heads started hurting. Some of them even had a fever and were bound to bed rest. All the grown ups were scared and confused. Truthfully, they started panicking. What now? How do they defend themselves? You see, sometimes, even the grown ups don't know what to do. But! Someone came up with an idea! What if face masks could protect them from the odor? Every one quickly ran to the nearest pharmacy, and soon enough there were no face masks left. Those who were too slow, created their own masks, by using fabric - better to have one than to have none.

But the odor kept on spreading. Hoards of people frantically ran around, buying extra food, drinks and toilet paper - what if the ghastly Virusants used everything up? What then?






Dragon Coronius took advantage of the chaos and made new decrees, rules and prohibitions each and every day. Making people so miserable made him so happy and giddy, that when he laughed maniacally he almost choked on his own saliva. He really was an evil creature.

One day, out of nowhere, he closed down all cinemas and theatres. The next day he closed down pools and playgrounds. “Can’t we have any fun anymore?” the people protested, and the enraged dragon sent his minions to do his bidding. “We’ll show you! Boo!” Those ghastly Virusants wreaked havoc among the people and scared them.




As punishment, the dragon demanded a kingdom wide house arrest. He closed down most stores. He forbade visits to the dentist. But because he had also shut down candy stores, people didn’t have to worry about having rotten teeth. Some parents had to keep going to work, and some were strictly forbidden to do so. How were people supposed to know right from wrong?! The kids were forbidden to go to school, which, in all honesty, they didn’t mind. Woohoo! Holidays! But soon enough they realized how much they missed their friends,



whom they were completely forbidden to see. No more hide and seek, no more chasing one another, no more ball games. They were so completely bored out of their minds, that they started missing even their most annoying classmates, and – yes, the world had come to this - even their classes. They wanted to study!!!

Johnny and Lizzy really missed their grandparents. Oh how they wished to go visit them and hug them. They just wanted for everything to go back to normal. T'was a Sunday when Johnny and Lizzy thought about what their grandma and grandpa might be doing at that very moment. And what about Albert? Is he on the windowsill, enjoying the rays of sun coming through the window?

Mommy talked with grandma on the phone every day, but their conversations were always very serious, and sometimes they even whispered, so the children wouldn't hear them. They wondered what their conversations were about. And from time to time mommy would cry in secret, she was very sad. Daddy too, Johnny and Lizzy noticed. But daddy acted like he was very brave and happy in front of them. When daddies are scared as well, it must be very serious.



And that is exactly what the evil Dragon Coronius wanted - for everyone to shake in their boots from fear of him. Well too bad, so sad! You see, Johnny and Lizzy knew all fairytales by heart, and we are all aware that those are full of wrongdoers, but at the end it always turns out fine! The dragon can't be staying forever - a lot of people in the kingdom have started coughing and falling ill!



The problem was, where to find a proper hero to beat the dragon?

Johnny and Lizzy thought and thought, but they didn't know any heroes.

So days went by. Each morning their mommy would make them breakfast, and instead of driving them to school, their daddy would teach them about numbers and letters in the living room. They also had mandatory P.E., because they couldn't just keep sitting all day every day, it wasn't healthy. They threw and rolled around the ball, even though it was chewed up by Fluffy, who really missed their walks around the park. They also jumped rope. And told each other stories of the world beyond their windows, the sea, the stars, flowers in the park, movies they liked. Sometimes they would sing songs and dance together - Lizzy liked that a lot, other times they would act out parts of fairytales. Daddy wasn't very good at it, but that was all the more fun. Mommy was very good at drawing, so they would draw what they saw through the window each day. Virusants didn't like it very much, when people stood around their windows. When that happened they would all come down the street, make hissing noises and threatening gestures with their tentacles. You see, they didn't want people seeing what shenanigans they were up to. When someone dared opening their window, the ghastly creatures would fly up to the person and snarl directly in their face. Disgusting! The person couldn't bear the smell for too long and they would quickly close the window.





Johnny and Lizzy were getting quite fed up with the Virusants. Sometimes they would stick out their tongues at them, or make funny faces. That would make them so angry, their warts started popping and purple goo came out. Eww!



One day Johnny's hands got very dirty when he was coloring and he went to the bathroom to wash them with soap. They had lots of soap at home and their mommy would often remind them to wash their hands. It was quite hard to get all the color off his hands, so he cleaned them with his mommy's disinfectant too - it smelled odd, but his hands were now squeaky clean.

He returned to his work and continued coloring. He became hot, so he opened the window. And what happened? Nothing. Not a single thing. The virusants didn't come spitting at him, because they **COULDN'T SEE HIM!** How? Johnny was very confused and quickly told everything to his sister. So she stepped next to the window, and the other side was immediately full of those ghastly Virusants. Johnny grabbed her arm and they ran to the bathroom together to thoroughly wash her hands. After that she also used disinfectant. They quickly returned to the window and - nothing. Because now the Virusants couldn't see her either. Wow! That's awesome!

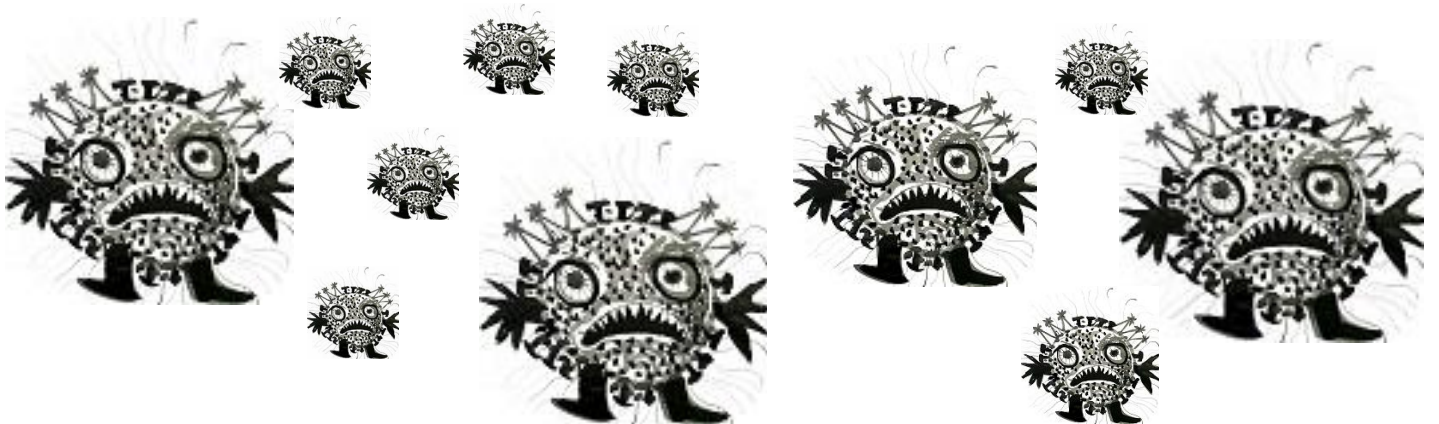
"Oh boy! What if we..." Johnny suggested. "YES!" Lizzy agreed right away and they excitedly waited for their parents to go to sleep that night, so they could go investigate what those Virusants were in the first place, and what they actually wanted. The moment they were waiting for finally came, when their parents fell asleep at approximately ten PM. Johnny and Lizzy thoroughly washed their hands again, and Johnny filled his water pistol with a mix of soap water and disinfectant - it might come in handy, right?

As a safety precaution, they both put on face masks, their mother made for them - Johnny's had blue cars on it, and Lizzy's had little ladybugs. And because they knew all the most important fairytales, they also brought a bag of rice. They stepped out into the silent darkness. The door banged

shut behind them. BANG! It made them slightly jumpy, but they took one another's hand and they set off on their adventure. Where they went, they dropped grains of rice. they felt like true heroes! Just like Hansel and Gretel! But instead of a witch, they had a big, evil dragon waiting for them at the end of the road.

Finding his lair wasn't as difficult as it may seem - they knew it would be filled to the brim with those disgusting Virusants, and all they had to do was follow their noses (luckily they had their facemasks!). They walked and walked until they stopped right in front of a huge gray building. It looked very official, but at the foot of the building there lay a dirty sign. There were words written on it in big capital letters. Lizzy was a year younger, but Johnny was already a second-grader, and reading was easy-peasy for him: "MI - NI - STER, no MI - NI - STRY OF HE - A - LTH". They looked up, where the discarded sign used to hang. It had been replaced by a different one, which read: "KO - RO - NI - US - 'S MI - NI - STRY OF DI - RT AND MUC - CUS."

Oh boy! So this is where the evil dragon lives. There were entire processions of Virusants streaming into the building. Never have the two children seen so many of them at the same time! They couldn't count that far, but there were a looooooooot of them.

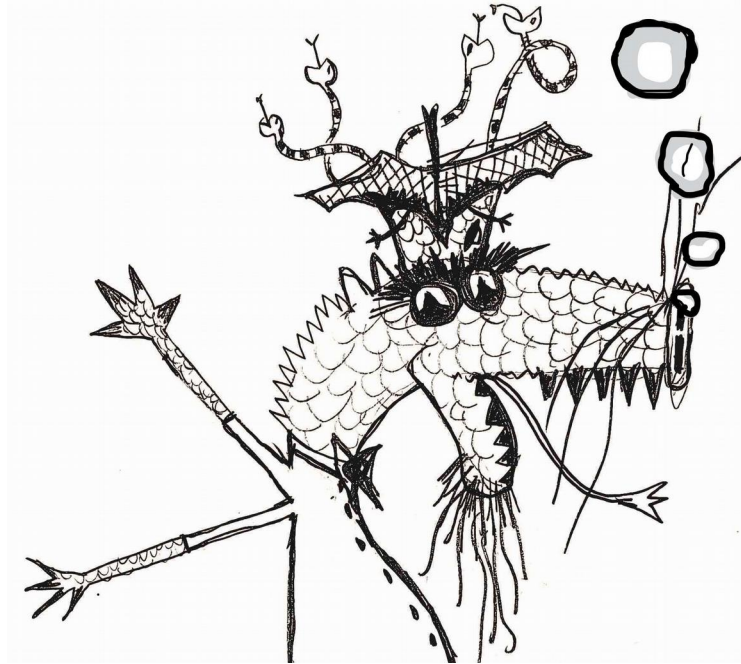


"Golly, what now? Luckily they can't see us", the children thought. They spoke in hushed voices, as to not drawing attention to themselves - they were on a spying mission after all! They didn't scream with terror, not even when a gigantic dragon appeared right in front of them, but they were however

frightened and held onto each other with even more fervor.

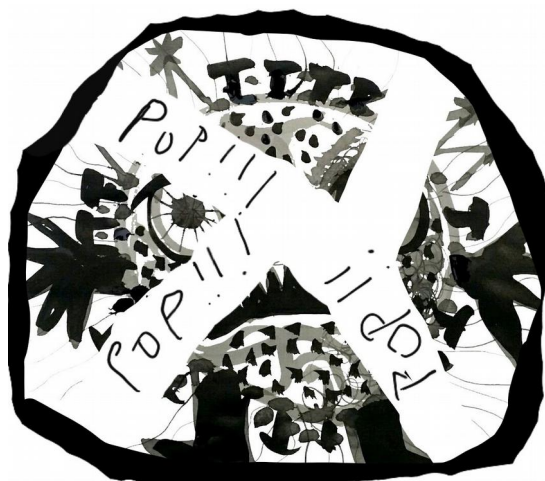
-“We confiscated half a million and 200.000 face masks, oh great one! They are all locked up in the porter’s lodge,” heaps of Virusants were boasting and bowing to the dragon.

-“That’s all?!” the Dragon roared angrily, thick smoke coming out of his nostrils.



-“ We-we-well n-now they c-c-can’t co-cover their m-m-m-mouths, your dragoness,” they stuttered with fear.

And one of them shook with fear the most. He shook and shook until, out of nowhere, he popped like a bubble - POP!- and just disappeared.

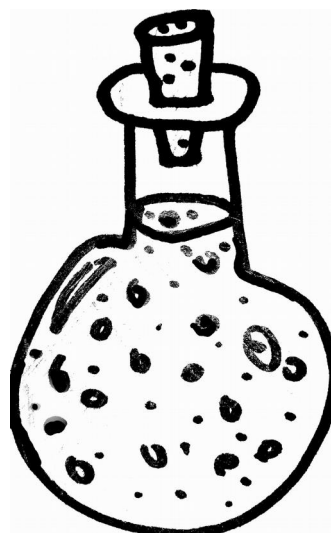


A gobsmacked Johnny looked at his little sister and she just nodded - she saw it too!

-”Ju-ju-just look ho-h-how much dro-dr-droplet juice we brought for you today!” and the little ghastly monsters showed him a bottle full of an odd-looking fluid. And quaking with fear another Virusant popped to his demise. POP!



-”Wonderful! Give it here!” the dragon snapped his nail on the ground, and took a big, thirsty gulp.



“Yum! You know what? I’ll stop roaring so much, but you lot ought to stop popping! I need as many of you as possible!” He said and stopped exhaling smoke through his nostrils.

-“It isn’t o-o-our f-f-fault. You know very well people’s fear

makes us stronger, but the second we become scared, it's over for us. Dunzo. A-a-and you s-s-scare us quite often.”



-“Grrrr... alright, I gave my word, I wouldn't anymore!” he growled. “What of the doctors, did you manage to catch them all?”

-“Just like you ordered, oh powerful one - every last doctor and their nurses. They are all locked up in the basement. But there were too many of them. We had to resort to locking them up in offices on the ground floor and the first floor, too.”

-“Splendid!” he purred in satisfaction.

-“Just to stay on the safe side we also kidnapped all dentists!” boasted a Virusant.

-“Yeah. And Pharmocists and hygienosers too, ha ha!” another cackled.

-“Pharmacists and hygienists!” a third corrected him.

-“Oopsie daisy...” he fell ashamed. “I'm sorry, my bad.”

-“What about firemen?” he hissed.

-“Not all of them,” one of them admitted, and when Coronius scorched him with his gaze, he quickly added:”But we're very close, very close!”-“Well, you see, they are very agile creatures, those firemen, plus they have those axes and hoses with fast water, and I-I-I'm scared of t-t-them,” another popped - POP! - and he was over and done with.



-“Oh no. NO, NO, NO and NO! I forbid you all to be scared!”

-“Your wish is our command, your dragoness!” they all exclaimed in unison. A single Virusant in the back popped - POP! - but the others disguised the noise with their cackling.



-“Good. On that note, when you are finished with firefighters, you shall start on policemen.”

-“Your wish is our command, your dragoness!” They repeated.

-“When you finish your task, no one will be left to save those humans, absolutely no one! Muahahaha! And you shall tell the people their isolation is over!!! Make them go out into the streets!” Coronius said with a delighted laugh. “Let everyone fall ill! We shall sow fear and our coughing illness everywhere we go, around the entire kingdom, and I shall have bottles of droplet juice in abundance, muahaha! Yum, yum yum!” he gave one last satisfactory purr and in a matter of a few booming steps, he returned to his chambers.

Virusants let out the breaths they were holding and slowly went back to whence they came from. But Johnny and Lizzy were eager to think of a plan!

-“To the basement! To free all captured adults. We can't do this all by ourselves,” the children agreed in hushed whispers and quietly made their way down a long hallway that led to the basement staircase.

Right in front of the staircase stood two Virusant guards:



What now? Of course! They still had the rice. Johnny grabbed a full fist of rice and threw it in one of the guards' faces.

-“AHHH!” the creature shrieked. “This hallway is haunted! Haunted I tell you!”

-“Don't be foolish! There's no one here. The only place haunted is your head.” The other one answered. But we all know they weren't alone, there were two invisible children right in front of them.

Now it was Lizzy's turn to throw a full fist of rice in the other one's face.

-“Hua! What was that?” he asked angrily.

-“Ahhh! I told you! Th-th-this place really is haunted! I'm s-s-scared!” and so he started shaking, until he popped to his demise. POP!



-“Grrr! You nitwit! I'll get to the bottom of this!” He started sniffing about, and was getting awfully close to where Lizzy was standing. Luckily she was still invisible! Johnny grabbed his water pistol and squirted the mix right into the virusants face, nonetheless. For safety reasons.

The poor ghastly creature didn't even have time to start being scared, or shaking, he just popped like a soap bubble. POP! See? This is why soap is so important!



-”Awesome. C’mon let’s go!” Johnny said.

Now they could finally descend the stairs to the basement.

Thankfully the Virusants were not the sharpest of pencils, and they left the keys right inside the locks, so they unlocked all of them - clink, clink , clink, clink, clink.... Out came dozens upon dozens of doctors, dentists and pharmacists in white coats, nurses in white dresses, hygienists in suits and ties and firefighters in uniforms and helmets. They couldn’t believe their eyes, when they saw their rescuers. They were true little heroes! There was no time to waste on celebrations! They asked the children how they managed to save them. Johnny and Lizzy animatedly explained that if you rinse your hands with soap and disinfectant, you become invisible to Virusants, and that droplet juice was what the dragon was actually after - eww! - and Virusants procured it for him by collecting mucus and saliva and snot of all the people who have fallen victim to the coughing illness. Oh and that Virusants were actually a bunch of scaredy cats, that popped to their demise when they were frightened!

The adults knew all about the disinfection and invisibility parts, that was why Coronius had kidnapped them in the first place, so they weren’t able to advise people and save them. But the other parts about Virusants and droplet juice were actually news to them. Now they understood the reason behind it all.

They all split up and inconspicuously headed in all the directions of soap and disinfectant. They were at the Ministry of Health after all, so there were undoubtedly large amounts of

both in the building, as hygiene was held in the highest of regards here.

On their way out they let out all of their colleagues from their office prisons, and they all quickly washed their hands with soap and disinfectant. Now they were all invisible and all of them inconspicuously exited the building - they took all of the soap and disinfectant with them, oh and of course they didn't forget about the face masks.

They didn't go home, though. They set out in all directions across the entire kingdom, to cure every last person, who had fallen victim to the coughing illness. Day and night, they cared for them selflessly, for some it was unfortunately too late, which made them all very, very sad.

But luckily, they were able to help most people, and they told everyone how they could protect themselves: if they always wore their facemasks, coughed only into handkerchiefs and sneezed into their sleeves, Virusants would run out on their luck, because there would be no droplets to collect. And then they would be unable to make that revolting droplet juice for their master. They also explained to everyone what scary cats those Virusants truly were. That people's fear gave them power, and if they weren't afraid anymore, if they sometimes caught the ghastly creatures and prepared and jumped out on them, and if kids made scary drawings and statues of them and showed them to the Virusants, it would scare them and make them pop into nonexistence. And thus Coronius, the dragon would lose all of his minions.

When he realised all of his prisoners had escaped, he became so angry that a lot of Virusants just popped willingly, because he was very scary. POP! POP! POP!...



The rest of his army soon evaporated, because people took the advice given to them. It didn't all happen at once. It took a while, because at first Virusants tried resisting and threatening them all with their tentacles, they hissed, and growled, oozed stench and they writhed in anger. But the good people of our kingdom never gave up, and in the end managed their grand victory!

Coronius was left all alone, and had no one to command. He had no army to hide behind, and no power whatsoever. It turned out, he was more bark than bite. It was all very embarrassing for him. Together the firemen and policemen managed to throw him out of their kingdom, and he flew far, far away, back to his Eastern land.

Everyone was happy and they all cried: "Hurray! Hurray! Hurray!" A round of applause for all our doctors, nurses, pharmacists, hygienists, epidemiologists, firefighters and policemen, and another round of applause for Johnny and Lizzy, for rescuing all of them!



“Who, oh who would fear the dragon?!
Smelly, yelly, his threats an empty wagon!
All it takes is a bit of soap,
They can't see us, nope, nope, nope.
Put a face mask on your mouth,
make the dragon go back South!
Oops! East!”

Everyone sang the song in excitement that everything would go back to normal. Grown ups went back to work, the children were overjoyed to go back to school and see all of their friends and their favourite teacher.

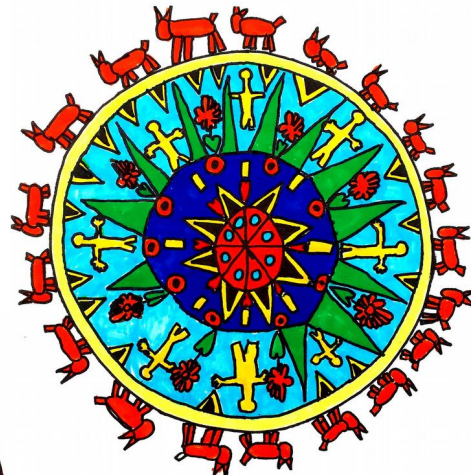
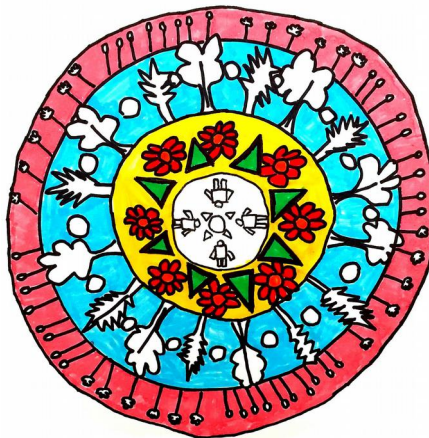
Johnny, Lizzy, mommy and daddy visited grandma and grandpa, even though it wasn't a Sunday. You should have seen all the hugs and kisses that were exchanged! Everyone was exploding with happiness! Grandpa was still coughing a little bit, you see, while everything was happening, he too had fallen victim to the coughing illness, that's why mommy cried so often, but now he was feeling so much better. The two siblings sat by his bed, each stroking one of his arms lovingly, and took their time explaining all that had happened to them.

Even Fluffy and Albert became friends, because they were so happy with how everything turned out. They went on a run around the garden together!



Everyone in the Kingdom still wore a facemask for a while, until it stopped reeking of Virusants everywhere. And what will they be doing with their hands? YES, washing them thoroughly, so Coronius will never return again!

And you should also wash your hands, dear reader. And, of course, wear your face masks, when you're outside. And you know what? You can also join the battle against Virusants! Well, of course! What if you made a drawing or a sculpture of your own ghastly Virusant, and put him in front of your window? When he flies by next time, he'll see it and it will scare him straight into popping himself out of existence! POP! And done.



*The story was written and thought up by sisters Klára Veselská and Alice Čop from Prague, Czech republic, an amazing idea was also brought by their mommy Eva Veselská, a few other amazing ideas and the dragon children can colour as they please were products of Kajetan Čop, other drawings were made by students of PS Miha Pinter Toledo, PS Plešivec and CVIU (Velenje, Slovenia), under the teaching of Robert Klančnik. Translated by Noemi Čop.

**Klára Veselská is a child psychologist and Alice Čop lives for theater, she has spent the last 20 years making original stories and plays for children.

At the moment lots of children (and adults) are experiencing this coronavirus situation with mountains

of stress, none of us are familiar with these measures, and the situation changes from day to day. The children's lives are turned upside down especially, their day to day schedule (which gives them a feeling of safety, because it enables a predictable life) was completely changed. Stories and fairytales can make facing tough situations, easier for children, they can also understand them better, and make connections between the imaginary and real worlds, plus they bring a spark of humor into the latter. This is the reason they joined forces and wrote this interactive story:" A STORY ABOUT DRAGON CORONIUS, AND HOW EVERYONE BEAT HIM TOGETHER". Every child can join the battle with the Evil Dragon. How? Well, that's something you'll find out at the end of the story.

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