



# IMAGINE YOUR STORY

## The Tragedy of Balywinth [Bah-lee-win-th]

*Written by Baldwin Minza, age 11, from Mosholu Library*

Once upon a time there was a world near perfection. A world with no hunger, thirst, or ill intentions. Thousands of years ago, it was known as Elyserium. But today, we know it simply as the planet Earth.

All those years ago, the world was protected by a magnificent dragon. The beast had large yellow eyes, golden horns, and ruby-red scales. But the most striking feature was its wings. Each time he opened his large wings, they resembled two large books—ones that would take an eternity to finish. This dragon was known to other beings as Balywinth. The admirable Balywinth was respected by all the lower beings because he helped them lead calm lives. The dragon was responsible for rounding up all the evil, injustice, bitterness, and suffering in the world. All these things he kept from escaping from a rift in time and space. Balywinth felt quite proud and important because he knew that without him, everyone would be in distress. The lower beings, including humans and animals, knew that their protector, the dragon, was to be feared. But Balywinth was a benevolent ruler.

Balywinth had powers beyond any regular being's comprehension. He was all-knowing and could see snippets of both the future and the past. But he could not control when he had these visions and he could not interfere with any of the visions. Now, the humans of that time were only half as intelligent as the dragon— but that was still more than any human of this era could know. None of the humans could see the past or future and none of them were greedy enough to wish for such a burden. Something else that was hidden from them was the Grimorax. The Grimorax came in two parts, each representing a wing on Balywinth. The right wing was a brilliant shade of scarlet and shone like a beacon. There was one large scale on the front cover of the wing and it had a large sapphire encrusted in the middle. Simply reading a word in the book would give you the power of creation. Meaning that you had the power to command anything to life and under your control. The left wing was blood red with a circular mirror. Anyone who looked into the mirror could see a single image of themselves in the near future. Opening the book would allow you to either be able to see the future or prevent you from dying of old age; never both (but no one knew how to use them except for Balywinth himself). Losing his wings would mean losing his power, and losing his powers would mean he would be reduced to nothing but a



wandering, powerless soul. He would have no definite shape and would not be seen nor heard by anyone. To make sure that these great powers did not fall into the wrong hands, Balywinth made sure to keep anyone and anything from getting too close to his wings. Yes, the dragon was a friend to all, but he made sure to assert dominance so no one would overstep their boundaries.

Moving to the humble beings who lived under the protection of the almighty dragon, no one could ever say that their lives were unpleasant or undesirable. Since they were all exceedingly intelligent, they knew that suffering only came because of things like greed or ill intentions in general. But knowing this did not stop a particularly ambitious man from wanting more. He would do anything and everything to have what he wanted— even murder his whole family (or so says a villager). This man, who was known as Crypterus, began to want more than being average (which was already extraordinary compared to current human standards). He wanted to be the very best. So one day, he decided to get what he wanted. The people who lived in the same village as him were terrified of how far he would go to get what he wanted. Normally, he

wasn't supposed to be able to feel greed because Balywinth was guarding all these bad feelings. But it seemed that his 'need' was so strong that he was able to create more greed. Crypterus tried to find the dragon but no one knew where Balywinth lived. Crypterus began to feel bitter because he couldn't find Balywinth fast enough and so he was now able to feel hate as well as greed. One day, Balywinth heard the cries of a couple of villagers who were being frightened by Crypterus. The greedy man was getting tired of his journey and was trying to take his anger out on the villagers. Balywinth took pity on the terrified humans and offered to hear Crypterus out. The dragon had been lonely for many centuries since he couldn't leave the rift he was guarding for long. Seeing that someone wanted to visit him made Balywinth's day. The dragon led Crypterus to his guard post near the rift. Knowing that humans had no ill intentions, Balywinth let his guard down around his human guest.

Crypterus knew that the dragon was no fool so he decided to take advantage of Balywinth's kindness and act like he was interested in becoming friends. Crypterus already had a plan of how he would overthrow the dragon and gain power before he even went looking for him. Now all he had to do was wait for the perfect time. He decided that he would wait for three days, observing Balywinth's patterns. On the fourth day since their first encounter, the malicious Crypterus had finally perfected his clever scheme to tear off both wings. He would wait until Balywinth was doing his daily observances of the rift and sneak up behind him. When the dragon had his back turned, Crypterus pulled out a silver dagger, a dagger of his own creation, one that could paralyze any being if it made direct contact with his target's blood, and hastily severed the dragon's right wing. Balywinth had never felt such pain and let out a fiery cry. He tried to turn around, to see who his assailant was, but to his dismay, he could not move. The dragon was not aware that he was breathing fire on the rift, which had opened enough for one of the ill intentions to escape. The ill intention that escaped was Blame and it came out in the shape of a monstrous hyena. The hyena let out a bloodcurdling laugh as it pranced out of its confinement and into the clean world, thinking of all the havoc it could wreck.

Below, in the villages, the people heard the dragons' roars and followed the sound to the rift. The scene



they saw unfolding before them went like this: Crypterus was now reading the right wing and trying to figure out what it meant; Balywinth was bleeding heavily from the place where a wing had been a while ago but he had stopped his fiery rampage, trying his best to move; the hyena had spotted the humans and laughed once more before entering their minds. Meanwhile, the rift was getting bigger, slowly but surely. Crypterus, furious that he didn't understand what he gained from the right wing, prepared another attack on the paralyzed Balywinth. And the villagers who were now full of blame sided with Crypterus. They felt that the ill intentions inside the rift were actually wonderful feelings (the hyena was manipulating them to think this. He wanted his fellow brethren to be freed from the rift once and for all). Crypterus did not want anyone else to accidentally gain powers from Balywinth's wings and told the villagers he would handle the beast. Running up to the dragon's remaining wing, Crypterus held up his sharp dagger and got ready to plunge it into Balywinth's flesh. But before he brought down the dagger, he caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror on cover of the left wing. What he saw— a pile of ashes— made him falter for a few seconds before he tore into the dragon's tissue once more. And once again, Balywinth couldn't hold back his flames and bellowed, allowing the rift to open faster. An antler was sticking out of the rift now, trying to get out. Not knowing what the ashes meant, Crypterus opened the right wing and saw his life flashing before his eyes. The day he was born...his perfect family playing by the lake...him drowning a stray dog...a young villager, crying out for his lost dog...him saying he didn't know what happened to the dog...him deceiving the dragon...and a flash of bright red...

With a shudder, Crypterus shut the book and noticed the few villagers walking towards him. Before any of them could take another step, a majestic deer with the intricate antlers emerged from the rift. This, the dragon knew, was Envy. None of the villagers saw it coming, as the deer approached them and possessed them, as the hyena did. Being filled with Envy and Blame, the villagers started arguing about who had the right to gain the powers of both the right and left wings of Balywinth. Crypterus was prepared to take on anyone who wanted him to hand over the books and raised his dagger to the first villager who approached him. The villager, who was blind with Envy, did not seem to care that his opponent had a weapon and charged him. Just before the two clashed, a pillar of fire separated them and they both jumped back before they were burnt. Balywinth could move again.

The enraged dragon realized his foolish mistake of trusting a human and did not attempt to stop the ill intentions that were now flooding out of the rift, which was now five times its usual size. Out came Greed in the form of a lion, Hunger and Thirst in the shape of a two-humped camel, and Madness in the form of a chimpanzee. All of these intentions took over the villagers at once and their minds could not endure the pressure or change and so they perished. As all of this was taking place, Crypterus was attempting to fend off the dragon who would no longer listen to reason. Crypterus, who was now hiding beneath both wings, was desperate to save himself and cried out to the remaining ill intentions saying, "Aid me and I shall tell you how to wield the powers of the dragon! Aid me and you shall have whatever you desire!". Hearing this, Balywinth did not hesitate to burn his own wings in order to ultimately kill Crypterus.

The ill intentions did not care for Crypterus or anyone. They only cared for themselves and would not have helped anyone, even if it meant gaining an immense treasure. In a matter of seconds, Crypterus



was reduced to ashes and Balywinth had shriveled up to less than half his usual size. When Balywinth had turned into a soul, something that was neither here nor there, he loathed himself for trusting someone like Cryperus. Someone who had ulterior motives he had failed to notice. The dragon decided that Cryperus deserved a fate worse than death— he had not suffered nearly as much as he deserved and so the two would be joined together in a battle lasting for all ages to come. Balywinth, with the last of his fading power of creation, summoned a deity who took hold of Cryperus' soul and dragged it to Balywinth. Cryperus' soul was full of resentment and regret almost as strong as the dragons. As the deity pulled the two souls dripping with hatred together, their ill intentions were so strong that their combined form created a new type of ill intention— Self-hatred.

Cryperus: "If my plan had been better, if I knew how to use the dragon's power, if only I had more..."

Balywinth: "If only I had known better than to put my trust in a lower being, if I had been wiser, if only I knew better..."

But it was too late. The world was now tarnished. All the ill intentions led to violence and brutality and death. Elyserium was no more. As a token of thanks to Cryperus for freeing them, the ill intentions gathered around Self-hatred and sang as follows:

"We sing this chant in honor of you  
Of you who were the greatest fool. 'All hope is lost'  
the people acclaim And who but you is there  
to Blame? Our plans of theft will always  
succeed Our hearts of gold, filled with Greed.  
Your world will forever be accursed  
For you will always Hunger and Thirst  
We will take this world in great strides,  
Holding our heads high with Pride  
We will paint this white canvass  
With nothing but pure madness.  
Welcome, you who have been newly created,  
Welcome to our world, Self-hatred!"