

# Morgan the Gorgon

by Jim Gold

Morgon the Gorgon had difficulty making friends. Snakes grew out of his head; they hissed whenever anyone came near him. Morgon was very upset. The number of snakes was increasing each year.

Finally, in desperation, he went to a snake doctor, who understood his problem immediately. “There is a snake coming out of your head for every evil deed you have committed,” he said. “The only way to get rid of them is to reverse the effects of the evil deeds. This is a very difficult task.”

“I’ll do anything to get rid of the snakes,” said Morgan.

“Then follow me to the Room of Mistakes.” The doctor led Morgan downstairs to a large underground chamber. As soon as they crossed the threshold, the snakes started hissing furiously. “Shut up!” shouted Morgan. But the snakes kept hissing. He had no control over them.

“If you look through this window,” said the doctor, “you will see the Field of Evil Deeds.”

“What evil deeds have I done?” asked Morgan.

The doctor laughed. “There are so many, I don’t have time to list them all. Judging from your most prominent snakes, though, you have robbed mailboxes, cheated your friends, lied to your parents, stolen from your classmates, and bullied little children. I see countless others, too.” The doctor put his hand on Morgan’s shoulder. “You must go to the Field of Evil Deeds,” he said. “Uproot every plant you find.”

“Will it get rid of the snakes?”

“Absolutely.”

As Morgan explored the Field of Evil Deeds, he found that it extended much farther than the doctor’s basement. It spread over many city blocks. He couldn’t see the end of it. Some plants were taller than he was. One looked like a small tree, with iron blades growing out of its trunk and razor blades instead of leaves. There were cactuses, rose bushes, and nettles. It might take weeks, he thought, to uproot one plant alone.

He got down on his hands and knees, and started weeding. The first plant he pulled up cut his thumb. He worked for hours on a huge cactus; his fingers blistered and bled.

After nine hours of weeding, he had uprooted only four plants.

He fell on the ground, exhausted. It seemed hopeless. But when he awoke, he saw that two of his snakes had fallen out. They lay dead on the ground beside him. Encouraged, he spent the next three days weeding furiously.

He worked in the field, ate in the field, slept in the field. When his hands got bloody, he bandaged them and continued weeding.

He weeded for months. Every few days, another dead snake fell off. After a year had passed, the field was completely cleared.

Morgan felt much better. He visited the doctor again. "Look at yourself in the mirror," the doctor said.

Morgan did. The snakes were all gone. He looked wonderful without them. "Fantastic!" he exclaimed. He was ready to face the world again, no longer as Morgon the Gorgon, but as Morgon the Fair.

from Carlos the Cloud

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