

Ginger River

A tale inspired by Chinese dragons, which have no wings.

River is a tiny dragon with freckles and no wings. He lives in a rural village in China called Dragontown.

It is his first day of school. River is excited to meet new friends – he has a huge smile!

The dragons at school have beautiful emerald skin. River is ginger. They have four sturdy legs, shimmery scales, and impressive talons. But River has two skinny legs, small claws, and is furry.

A young dragon shouts at River, "Why are you red and hairy?"

"He has two twiggy legs!" yells another dragon.

River accidentally trips and faceplants on the floor. Ouch.

"Ginger snaps!" they laugh.

A tearful River leaves school and scurries back to his cave, located at the bottom of a big isolated hill in Dragontown, separated by a river. River's mom strokes him on her lap and tells him how special he is.

A few months pass. River is now too big for his cave! But he refuses to leave it. River is the reddest he's ever been, and his tiny fur has grown into glimmering feathers.

One night, heavy rain pours violently in Dragontown. A loud rumble! Mud starts to slide. There's screaming from the village. River's mom leans out of the cave, but oh no! She bellows. A big rock has fallen down the hill and traps her tail.

River roars. Using his body, he smashes through the rock. As he crashes through and frees his mom, his latent wings spread wide apart, and he flies!

River marvels at his newfound wings. His mom gives him a smile, and nods.

River lights up like a fireball and zooms into the village. Diving into mud like a lightning bolt, he grabs every trapped dragon out of danger.

As River puts the last dragon safely on the hill, the landslide stops. The dragons look up to River in the sky, the sun shining bright behind him like a magical halo. The whole village lights up a golden red from River's feathers.

"I always knew you'll do great things!" says River's mom.

A young dragon asks, "Are you a chicken?"

An old dragon shouts, "Chickens can't fly! He is a phoenix!"

"Call me River...", River says shyly, and then adds, now confidently, "...River Phoenix."

All the dragons bow to thank River as he flies into the golden sunset.