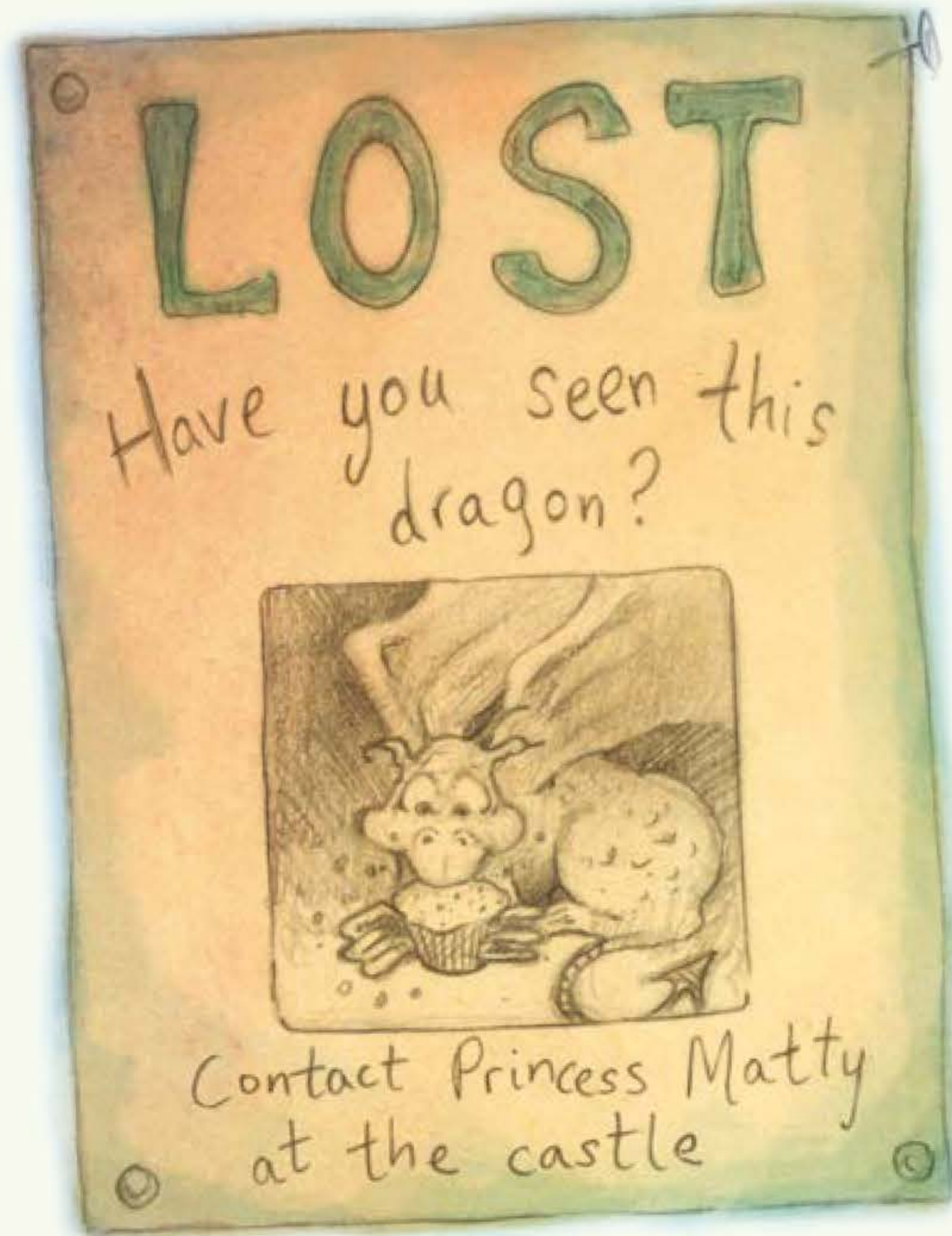


# Chapter 1

## The Missing Dragon

In the very top bedroom of the Goblin Castle, Matty, the Goblin Princess, was worried. Posters were spread all around her. Underneath a picture of a large, fat dragon, Matty had written: *Lost! Have you seen this dragon?*



The picture was of Sparks, the adorable but greedy castle dragon, who hadn't been seen since yesterday.

'Sparks has never missed breakfast



before. *Someone* must have seen her,' thought Matty, biting her bottom lip. Had the hobgoblins kidnapped her? They had been seen near the castle lately and were known to steal dragons to heat their draughty caves.

'Matty!' screeched the Goblin Queen. Matty's mum came into Matty's bedroom, holding baby Princess Plop. 'Look at the state of this room. It's spotless! It's almost ...' she shuddered, '... clean! Untidy it immediately!'

'Plop,' agreed Princess Plop.



‘Yes, Mum,’ Matty sighed.

Matty knew that she’d let her room get too tidy. She was always getting in trouble for this. Most goblins like their rooms messy, they eat disgusting food and are scared of pretty things like kittens and butterflies. The goblin world is a very upside-down place, and the Goblin Princess never quite felt like she belonged.

‘Now, Matty,’ said the Queen, ‘Mrs Dollop is making some tasty beetle muffins. I’ll get her to bring you some up as a special treat.’



‘Oh no!’ thought Matty. ‘I hate beetle muffins more than untidying my room. If only Sparks were here – she’d eat them for me. She loves Mrs Dollop’s cooking.’

In the castle kitchen, mice scurried over the kitchen shelves. There were sticky jars of snail slime, dusty packets of spiders’ legs, and jars of dead flies, a goblin favourite. Mrs Dollop, the castle cook, was showing Stinkwort, Matty’s younger brother, how she made her famous beetle muffins.



‘The trick, Stinky, is to add the snail pulp *before* the toadstool flour, then toss in the beetle bits. Delicious!’

