

Fireball Wand

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Meerfus the wand-making Magician was always making new wands. It was his hobby, his life, and his career. People would come to him with a desire for a magic wand, and he would find a way to make it. You see, not everyone could do magic, but anyone *could* use a magic wand. This time, he had been contracted to make a wand of fireballs.

Meerfus was often leery of making wands that could be used as dangerous weapons. Yes, he'd made some that started campfires, that spanked bad kids, or that killed bugs, but he didn't often make ones that could cause the owner to get into a lot of trouble if used wrong. The client this time was a traveling entertainer and an old friend, so he didn't doubt the man's intentions.

Meerfus set out early with Duncan, the young apprentice that helped Meerfus get some of his ingredients for wand-making. Their first task was to get a dragon's morning breath in a flask. It would not be easy at all, and it could be very dangerous. Duncan was dressed from head to toe in fire-proof layers, and he wore a visor over his face as he journeyed into a cave where a young dragonet was supposed to live.

Duncan crept up carefully, as quietly as he could in the cave. He spotted the red serpent-like creature with ease. Even a dragonet, a young dragon, was rather large. This one was about the size of a cow, not counting the tail. He knelt carefully and put the flask right next to one of the sleeping creature's nostrils. A huff of sulfurous exhalation fogged the flask. Duncan quickly corked the flask just as the dragon's eyes began to peel open, and then he ran for the exit, hearing roaring at his back. There was no waiting around near waking dragons!

The two of them hid in a gully near the dragonet's cave for a couple hours, and then moved on to find the next ingredients: the ashes and a charcoal twig of a rare tree. There was an ornamental garden several hours' ride away by horse. Meerfus entertained Duncan with legends and lore as the rode along; that was part of his job as master to his apprentice. Duncan wasn't the sharpest pupil, but he did listen.

With some haggling and bargaining, the owner of the ornamental garden allowed them to cut some branches from a tree that otherwise grew only in a land far away. Meerfus and Duncan were quite tired by the time they made it back home.

The next morning, Duncan gathered a long wick from the chandlery, where they made candles. It was the final ingredient. By the time he'd arrived, Meerfus had already burned the rare branches. He'd saved one as a charred twig for the wand's stick, but the rest was charcoal and ashes.

With the magic words: *ExploDICUS Smallus Fireballizimus*, Meerfus bound the ingredients magically. The wick had been coiled about the end of the charred twig, and it seemed to be permanently burning or smoldering in a persistent cloud of ash and dragon's breath. With a quick shake of the wrist, a fireball the size of a fist burst from the end of the wick, which glowed bright red and never burnt out.

Meerfus clapped his hands in delight and patted his apprentice on the back. It was another success!



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. Why does Meerfus not like to make wands that could be used as weapons?
 - A. Someone might get hurt trying to use it.
 - B. They could be used for bad things.
 - C. They might get stolen.
 - D. He really doesn't mind actually.
2. Which of these is NOT a wand that he's made before that could be used like a weapon?
 - A. firestarter wands
 - B. bug killer wands
 - C. face slapper wands
 - D. kid spanking wands
3. What is the first ingredient they have to fetch?
 - A. charcoal
 - B. ashes
 - C. a wick
 - D. dragon's morning breath
4. Which of these is NOT an ingredient they have to find?
 - A. ashes and coals from a rare tree
 - B. dragon's morning breath
 - C. a fire-starting kit
 - D. a new wick from a candle shop
5. Based on the story, how would you best describe Meerfus and Duncan's relationship?
 - A. Meerfus seems to use Duncan for hard work, and sometimes teaches him a little.
 - B. They are like best friends.
 - C. Duncan works very hard, but Meerfus is mean to him.
 - D. They are like father and son.

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