Saint George and the Dragon

This is the tale of St. George and the dragon. It has been told for over 15 centuries. It takes place during a time called the Dark Ages, when kings ruled the land, wizards cast spells, and monsters roamed free.

The queen of fairies had taken young George in as a baby. The fairies raised the child to grow up brave, strong, calm, courteous, quick, and clever. They taught him to be a noble knight.

At last the time came when George was old enough to seek out his destiny. The queen of fairies called him to see her.

“Your journey starts today,” she told him. “You have many adventures before you. Your fantastic quest will take six years. The world is filled with monsters to be slain and battles to be fought. You’ll meet kings and paupers, wizards and witches, evil princes and kind princesses.”

“Yes, Your Majesty,” George bowed before the queen. He was very fond of her. He was sad to leave the land of the fairies, but he was not afraid.

“Always remember one thing,” the queen added, tapping George’s silver battle helmet. “Your greatest weapon, George, is your brain.”With those words, George set off. He traveled for weeks, through many wonderful kingdoms. But as George approached Silene, he noticed the land changed from lush and green to dark and desolate. It seemed the ground had been crossed by fire. There was no grass, only the darkest mud. The trees were bare and black, and a foul stench filled the air.

As George walked through this stark land, he did not see a soul — not a bird, not a squirrel, and certainly not a single person.

George finally saw a castle in the distance. A high, solid wall enclosed the castle and the small city around it. The gate was closed up tight. Again, George saw no one around. When he got closer, he saw a young lady. She crept quietly through the gate.

“Excuse me, my dear lady,” he called after her.

“Quiet!” she hushed him. “Have you no sense? You would do well to leave here now and never return.” “But I am a brave knight here to help you,” George whispered.

“Alas, sir,” the woman replied, “you are but one man. I fear that you cannot help.”

George looked her in the eyes. “It is my destiny,” he said to her. “I will not go until I have done all I can, even if it costs me my life.”

“I am Princess Sabra,” she said. “Come with me.”

They tiptoed through what was once a deep, green forest. Sabra explained why the kingdom lived in such fear.

A fearful dragon had lived in the kingdom for many years, she told him. The horrible beast had ravaged the land. Many men had tried to slay the dragon, but its sharp claws, vast flapping wings, and fiery breath made it impossible to reach, let alone kill. The people had moved to protection within the castle walls. But soon the dragon had run out of animals to eat.

“If you do not feed me sheep each day,” the dragon roared, “I will come through those walls for my breakfast!” So each day, as the sun rose, so rose the dragon, looking for its breakfast.

“The dragon sleeps now,” said the princess, “but we gave up our last two sheep this very morning. Tomorrow we shall have nothing to give the dragon, and we shall all perish.”

“Then I have arrived at the right time,” said George bravely.They came to a cave in the dark forest. “To slay the dragon,” Sabra told George, “we need help. That is why we are here.”

In the cave there lived a wise old hermit. Some said he was a sorcerer over 900 years old, but no one knew for sure.

Sabra and George crept up to the hermit, who stared into his fire. He did not turn to look at them, but he spoke as if he knew they were coming.

Long ago, it was told, Two brave knights would come to know,

The only way to save the rest: The Serpent's weakness in his breath.

With those words, an ancient hourglass appeared at their feet. George did not understand. He asked the strange little man, but the hermit would speak no more. When George and Sabra left the cave, it was already dark. They knew they must hurry to the dragon's lair. They had to get there while the dragon slept.

"The hermit speaks in puzzles," Sabra sighed. "What do we do with this ancient timepiece?"

George remembered what the queen of fairies had told him. His best weapon, she had said, was his brain. He studied the hourglass closely. Each bit of sand looked like a magic crystal frozen in time.They arrived at the lake. George and Sabra walked softly through the fog so they would not be heard. The sands in the hourglass dropped with every careful step.

"The hourglass will lead us," George whispered. "We must wait until all the sand has dropped through."

The smell as they approached the lair was horrible. George and the princess set George's shield near the sleeping dragon's head to protect themselves from the dragon's fiery snores. They watched the icy blue sands tick away.

Suddenly the dragon stirred. Now Sabra thought, surely the dragon would find them before all the sands ran through the hourglass. The dragon raised up and rubbed his slimy eyes.

As George watched the dragon rise, he stopped watching the hourglass! The very last grain of sand was dropping through. At that moment, the dragon yawned a great, fiery yawn.

"Now, George!" Sabra shouted.George knew what to do. He threw the hourglass up into the dragon's yawning mouth. It shattered on the dragon's slithering tongue in a cloud of icy mist.

Now our two heroes had sorely angered the dragon. He looked down to see them. Both George and Sabra ducked behind the shield. The dragon reared back to hurl a fiery blast at them. But, as fortune would have it, only cool ice and soft snow came from the dragon's mouth. The dragon took a deep breath, certain the furnace inside of him would melt the ice.

But, the hermit's magic had changed the dragon. His mouth shut tight with frozen ice, the once-fearsome dragon jumped into the deep, warm lake. Only there could he keep from freezing from the inside out. That dragon never bothered another soul. Some have seen him coming up for air on occasion, but only on very warm nights. The dragon would not dare stay out of the warm water too long, for fear of becoming a giant icy statue.

George and Sabra had saved the kingdom. It was Sabra who was the second knight that the old Hermit had spoke of in his strange riddle.

The two arrived at the castle to great cries of joy and triumph. The grateful people of Silene were no longer prisoners in their own kingdom.

The king offered George all he had in thanks, but George wanted no payment for his deeds."I have many more adventures left to face," George told the people. "They are my greatest reward."

George shared the story of the dragon of Silene to whomever asked along his journey. And it is still told today as an example of bravery and good versus evil. That is how George, the brave knight from the land of the fairies, earned his sainthood.