

### The Dragon Slayer

The dragon moved forward, his claws digging into the soft earth. He looked at the girl, with a raging hunger in his eyes, as his rough tongue licked his scaly lips. But the girl standing before him - was fearless. She stood before the mighty beast with a jagged knife clutched in her hand. The dragon, sensing danger, opened his mouth, showing an array of yellowed teeth.

Suddenly, the girl raised her arm and threw the knife - and it sliced through the chilly air - into the open mouth of the surprised dragon. His body crumpled to the ground as he choked his dying breaths and lay lifeless on the cold, wet grass.

The girl was a legend. Her name was Elena, and she was a dragon slayer.

Elena twisted her jet black hair into a neat bun, before crouching down next to the dragon's corpse. She bravely thrust her hand in the open mouth of the dead dragon, and pulled out her knife.

A mixture of saliva and blood dripped down the blade, and Elena dropped the knife in utter disgust. From her pocket she tugged out a plain brown cloth which she used to clean the gruesome substance off her knife. She tossed the blood-covered cloth into a nearby bush, and pushed her knife into a carved, wooden case attached to her leather belt.

Upon hearing the commotion of a hunting party, she slipped off into the darkness. She could not be discovered. For if she was she would be executed.

She was legend, a heroine, but only among the villagers and townspeople she saved. Dragons belonged to the King, Stephan. He sent them to cause chaos and turmoil, for he was a cruel man who enjoyed the suffering of others for his amusement. But he was also a greedy man, whose obsession for money brought up a new tax each day. The people were bankrupt, and Elena knew by killing the dragon it lessened the King's power.

The King had an odd connection to the dragons. The darkness inside him drew the beasts to him. But his strength was also his weakness. He had a favourite dragon, a pet, some might say. His dragon's name was Fireblade, as his flames were meant to be the most fearsome ever seen. The connection between them was so strong, that if Fireblade died, the King died. Elena sought to kill the dragon using his death to kill the King.

It was a cunning and dangerous plan. Elena needed all the help she could get, but anybody she trusted could betray her. Nobody knew her as a dragon slayer, her identity was kept secret, and she meant to keep it that way. She would have to go in alone, fight the beast, and kill it. Or risk being found out and executed...

She climbed a tree, and perched on its strong branches, waiting patiently. A number of soldiers were searching for the dragon, and eventually they found the corpse in the small forest clearing, where it had been killed.

Elena watched them carefully, then heard them sending a messenger for the King. He would bring Fireblade, he always did, and then she would attack the dragon from above. It was a simple, yet clever strategy. It would give her the element of surprise - exactly what she would need.

The hours passed by. But Elena could wait, she had waited for this moment for months. In the distance she could see a fuzzy orange light, soaring towards them, towards the soldiers, towards where the dead dragon lay. It came closer, and closer, and you could see clearly, it was Fireblade and his master.

Fireblade bent his scaly legs preparing to land, and spurted out an unbearably hot flame that lit up the sky in a menacing way. He landed, and his feet sank a few inches into the grass and mud. The King slid off the back of Fireblade, and ran to the dead dragon, collapsing to his knees, talking in a prayer like mutter. He called the soldiers away, leaving him to mourn the passing.

Elena looked not at the King, but watched Fireblade intently, waiting for opportune moment to strike. Seeing her chance she bravely jumped, stabbing the dragon in the back, piercing his black heart. The dragon and the King fell to the ground simultaneously, dying almost instantly.

Elena had done it, Fireblade and Stephan were dead! But who would take over as King?