

## The Legend of Sir George and the Dragon

adapted by Brooke Bailey

Once upon a time, there lived a poor knight named George. He was traveling with his friends, looking for some good to do, and had a dream. Golden lightning flashed, and a voice said: "Go out into the desert alone, where nothing grows but oranges. There the hermit will tell you your quest."

Now George was a knight, and all he ever wanted was a quest because his job was doing good and protecting people. So even though he was confused because he knew oranges can't grow in deserts, he said goodbye to his friends, and set off alone into the desert with his faithful horse, in search of a hermit.

He had to get on a boat to find a desert, first of all. He and his horse sailed many days and nights until they reached Africa and the country of Egypt. He asked around and heard of a desert where hermits were said to live all by themselves in caves, grow long beards, and pray all day, and eat hardly anything. They could be grumpy because of this, but George was on a quest.

He soon saw some smoke from a cooking fire on the distant horizon and rode his horse till he found one- a real live, skinny, old, grumpy hermit.

The hermit had magic powers and knew George would be coming. "It's about time!" he snapped. "Don't you know a horrible dragon is terrorizing the entire land? Every day, he demands a beautiful maiden to eat and now there are no young girls left except the princess! Unless someone can kill this dragon, she will be sacrificed tomorrow! Are you in or out?"

"I will save the princess, if I can," said George humbly. "Um... do you know if there is an orange tree nearby?"

"Don't be stupid!" barked the hermit. "We're in the desert, but I have some nice cactus jerky for you."

George rested that night with the hermit, and the next day set out to the valley where the dragon lived. The closer he got, the darker it got- the desert sun was blotted out with smoke from the beast's breath, and bones of sheep and animals littered the sands.

He saw a little procession of people going towards the valley and galloped his horse over to them.

"What are you doing? Don't you know the dragon lives down there?" he asked.

One girl, dressed in fine silks, raised her chin. "Of course I know it," she said. "I am the Princess Sabra and I am the last girl. I am going to the dragon to save my people." Her words were brave, but her eyes were full of tears.

"Go home," George said. "I am a knight. I will try to slay this dragon so that you will not have to die, or anyone else, ever again."

Sabra and the people retreated to their city, and George and his horse were alone. They entered the valley. As he got close, he and his horse had to take out some herbs and smell them, because the dragon's breath was so stinky and toxic you might drop dead if you breathed it. Suddenly with a HISS the dragon scuttled out, straight at George and his horse! It was fifty feet long, like a huge crocodile, with stubby wings and long sharp teeth, hissing fire and smoke.

George was terrified- but because he was brave, he stood his ground and threw his spear anyway. It shattered into a thousand pieces, because the dragon had hard tough scales. George fell right off his horse, and the horse ran away.

The dragon opened its reeking mouth to spray poison and George thought for sure he was dead. But-

The poison evaporated a few inches from his face!

For George had rolled up against an enchanted orange tree which grew there in the bone-littered valley against all logic, and it protected George from the poison. An orange dropped down, shining. George sucked the juice out and felt stronger. He went out to fight again.

He had lost his spear but had a sword. He tried to smite the dragon with his sword, but the dragon HISSED! Poison sprayed all over George! Luckily he was wearing his armor so he was okay, but the poison made the armor- and the sword- split right in two. So George had to run away and hide under the orange tree again.

Some of the poison had got on his skin, so he plucked another orange and rubbed the juice on the wounds, which healed like magic. George had lost his sword but he still had a little dagger. He summoned all his strength, and threw it at the dragon. It hit the beast under its stubby wing, and fell dead- for under the wing is the only part of a dragon with no scales, and so it's only vulnerable spot.

When the dragon died, the orange tree disappeared. The golden sun came out again and filled the air with its light. All the people and the princess, who had been watching from the distance, ran into the valley cheering. George was given many treasures and honors, but what really made him happy was that he had finally done a good deed, and was a true knight. The Princess gave him his horse, whom she had caught and calmed, and George rode off into the sunset, looking for more good to do. And he had many other adventures, but those are other tales and shall be told another time.