

## Emmett Slays a Dragon

*By his uncle, Dennis Payton Knight*



Emmett is an intelligent young man of the world, and scoffs at such nonsense as unicorns, mermaids and abominable snow creatures, seeing them as the childishness of adults with way too much time on their hands, trying to scare him into finishing his fish sticks with stories of giant squids with sucking tentacles. Their tales of fire breathing dragons just made him giggle.

That describes Emmett as he was for the first five years of his life, right up until yesterday, a sunny afternoon, when he was annoyed by a monster swooping from some high Colorado peak. He was enjoying his spring vacation, thinking about such myths as sea creatures, mermaids and unicorns, those ridiculous ponies with the spiral horns all the silly girls in his school seemed to adore. He found the intrusion of a green creature flitting and flapping about his ears to be a nuisance, quite distracting.

“Bug off, dragon breath!” Emmett demanded as he leaned and turned away to avoid the obnoxious exhalation. “Shoo!”

There was a momentary pause in the fluttering of wings and fire. “Hee hee hee!”, laughed the dragon in short breaths, a little less fiery, “ha ha ha ha!”

“You better go see a dentist about your problem, dragon breath!” Emmett continued.

“Stop, you’re slaying me, kid!” The dragon laughed again and doubled over, wrapped his great wings around his scaly sides, giggled and guffawed and blew something out his nose, a peculiar mixture of steam and snot; unpleasant, to be sure, but certainly better than fire. The beast had by now tumbled from the air and had tied himself into a knot, rolling about in laughter on the spring grass, crushing daffodils, and displacing butterflies and earthworms out for a stroll.

Emmett was in control now, and he couldn’t resist rubbing it in with the only joke he could think of at the moment. “Knock, knock.”

“Who’s there?”

“Dragons don’t say ‘whoo’. Owls say whoo!”

“Ha ha, ha ha, snort!” Tears of laughter flowed from those enormous, menacing dragon eyes, but the fire had gone out, and Emmett felt just a little sorry for the creature. He was not so menacing now, reduced to just a big old roly-poly. Emmett got him untied by prying one wing from the other, and got his little clawed legs stretched out and pointed in the right direction. He smoothed ruffled scales, straightened the tail, massaged the long neck, and brought the creature a drink of water.

The grateful dragon spread his wings and flapped up beside Emmett, now his best friend. But when he realized the fire was gone, the tears flowed again, not in laughter this time, but in sadness, for without breathing fire, he had lost his reason for living.

But Emmett had not quite finished saving the day. “Follow me, Dragon. Dad’s got some super-hot jalapeno peppers in the refrigerator.”

And that is the story of the day Emmett slayed a dragon.

