

The Dragon

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The gigantic dragon lunged at Pip, but came to a sudden earth-shaking stop that caused the whole fortress to tremble. Pip, who thought his time on this earth was over, raised his shield to protect himself from the inevitable flames. But they didn't come.

"Stand back!" shouted the Black Knight as he rushed towards the enormous creature wielding his sword. "I've fought bigger dragons than this one!"

The dragon opened its massive jaws and a great tongue of fire flew into the air above the knight's head. The Black Knight ducked down and then, lifting his sword, managed a quick blow to the dragon's neck. The blade scraped its scales but, surprisingly, the dragon did not retaliate.

The Black Knight raised his sword again in an attempt to inflict a more serious wound.

"Stop!" shouted Pip. "Don't strike it! That dragon could have burnt us to a crisp if it had wanted to."

"What do you mean?" the knight yelled back. But Pip didn't answer. Instead, he ran behind the

dragon and, raising his sword aloft, he brought it down smartly with all the strength he could muster. As before, the sword sliced through the solid matter as if it were cutting through butter. The huge iron rings that had held the dragon captive fell in half and (for the first time in many a year) the dragon found itself free of its shackles.

"What have you done?" hollered the knight. "Now there is nothing to hold it back. It will kill us both!" The dragon raised its mighty head and roared. Then stretching its colossal wings, it took a meaningful glance at Pip before soaring up into the vast empty sky.

