

# Sir Elliot and the Dragon

Sir Elliot dug his heels into the flanks of his trusty steed. "Tis a beautiful morning, Neigh-Neigh. I crave an adventure! Let us gallop to yonder mountain valley and see what we will see."

The two friends raced across a field of flowers blossoming in rainbow colors. They jumped a babbling brook, and continued along its far banks until Neigh-Neigh was covered in sweat. He slowed, panting heavily.

"Yes, I agree it is time for a rest, my friend," Sir Elliot said. "I could benefit from a break myself." The knight dismounted and rubbed his sore backside. "Let's take a pause beside this rushing brook and take our fill of its liquid refreshment."

Neigh-Neigh nodded his approval and stepped to the shallow stream and dipped his nose in a still pool created by a semi-circle of smooth stones cupped against the bank. Sir Elliot wandered a ways from his horse and stepped on a rock protruding above the bubbling surface. He knelt and cupped his hands under a small waterfall tumbling from the neighboring rock and took a long drink of the cool clear water. Next he splashed his face and neck.

Sir Elliot glanced up and froze in mid-splash. On the opposite bank of the brook, stood a purple dragon with green spikes and wings. He was small for a dragon, but nonetheless impressive as he towered above the knight and his horse. Slowly the beast opened his snout revealing sharp pointed teeth.

"Please," the dragon said in a most pleasing oratorical voice. "I beg you, do not fear!" He bowed slightly. "My name is Dalton, the Storytelling Dragon. I am so pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr....?"

"Sir Elliot," he answered, "and this is my brave and loyal steed, Neigh-Neigh." The knight's expression seemed as though meeting a talking dragon was an everyday occurrence. Neigh-Neigh shook his frame and eyed the dragon warily, most likely wondering if dragons like horse meat.

"Would you be interested," Dalton asked, "in my crossing the brook and telling you a story?"

Sir Elliot glanced at his horse who had stepped back a few paces and turned his head toward his master. It wasn't exactly acquiescence, but at least he didn't run the opposite direction. The knight took that as a positive sign.

"Dalton, you say," Sir Elliot replied to the dragon. "That's an interesting name for so fierce a species as yourself."

“I had no choice in the matter,” Dalton informed him. “My creator named me, raised me, and taught me the stories I tell.”

“Very good, then, Dalton, come join us.” Sir Elliot waved him over. “I should like to hear a rousing tale, and I should think Neigh-Neigh would also be delighted.”

Dalton half-jumped and half-fluttered on his green wings, a couple of feet above the rushing stream. He landed quite softly for a dragon, and settled himself in front of Sir Elliot. Neigh-Neigh summoned his bravery and stepped a bit closer in order to hear better, while to be safe, kept himself far enough away from chomping distance of the dragon. Soon he commenced munching the lush green grass.

“Would you care for one of my dragon snacks while you listen?” Dalton reached into the bag slung around his middle. “I always carry a few sticks of giant lizard jerky here in my story bag,” he said. He reached inside and pulled out two dark sticks approximately one foot long and two inches wide. “I keep these mini-snacks on my person, so to speak, for just such occasions. He tossed one dark leathery stick to Sir Elliot and the other to Neigh-Neigh who caught it between his teeth and began to chew with zest.

After a few moments of gnawing on the strange treat, Sir Elliot tore off a corner and grinned at Dalton. “This is very tasty. Exactly the right amount of spice. Thank you, Dalton.”

“Now,” the dragon said as he pulled a crisp parchment from his bag, “let me see what story begs to be told on this glorious afternoon.” He unrolled the crinkly parchment, and it cascaded to the ground. “Ah, yes,” he said after running a claw down the list and smacking it midway down. “This tale will do nicely.” The dragon rolled up the parchment and replaced it in his bag. “I always keep a list of titles with me,” he explained, to refresh my memory. However, I prefer to use artistic license and spontaneity in the actual telling, so I never read word for word from a book. The list also fits easier in my bag.”

Sir Elliot sat on a grassy knoll in front of his horse and continued to chew on the giant lizard jerky. Neigh-Neigh had finished his jerky stick and was enjoying a few wildflowers for dessert.

“Once upon a time,” Dalton began, “there was a little boy who wanted nothing more than to own his very own dragon.”

As Dalton the Storytelling Dragon continued his tale, Sir Elliot listened with rapt attention. He was mesmerized at the talent displayed by the dragon’s artistic and theatrical rendering.

Before the story came to its conclusion, Dalton’s audience had grown. A herd of elk had wandered in from the nearby forest and gathered around the knight and his horse. They all watched and listened as Dalton finished his performance with a flourish of his wings. He spread his forearms and ended with a majestic bow.

“Bravo! Bravo!” Sir Elliot shouted. “That was a most inspiring and fascinating tale, Sir Dragon!” Unfortunately, though the other listeners seemed pleased, Sir Elliot was the only human present, and therefore his efforts provided the lone voice of appreciation and applause.

“Welcome and thank you for coming,” Dalton said to the late elk arrivals. “If you have any questions about what you missed, please stay and I will be happy to answer them. I could possibly even be persuaded to do an encore for you.”

“I’m sorry, Dalton, but Neigh-Neigh and I must be on our way, but please continue for the elk’s enjoyment.

A dozen elk cows followed behind the one big bull elk who sported a twelve-point rack. They gathered around the dragon. Sir Elliot heard a strange sound coming from both Dalton and the bull elk.

“Well, what do think of that, Neigh-Neigh! A dragon who speaks English and Elk!” While Dalton attended to his new fans, Sir Elliot mounted his steed. He waved at the story gathering and turned his horse toward their castle home. “It truly was a lovely day for a ride and a good story.” Neigh-Neigh agreed with a whoosh of his tail.

They had ridden for a mile or so, when Sir Elliot heard a strange sound coming from the area where his stomach was located. Soon after, he heard an intense roaring coming from his horse.

“I say, Neigh-Neigh,” Sir Elliot said, “I am feeling a bit of distress in my lower regions. It sounds as though you are as well.” The horse let out a distressed neigh, affirming the knight’s evaluation. “I do believe it would be beneficial for both of us to make a stop at the apothecary on our way to the castle.”

Horse and rider simultaneously belched, and a sour aroma filled the air. “That giant lizard jerky was delicious,” Sir Elliot observed, “but it must have been spicier than I first detected.”

Neigh-Neigh accelerated his speed at the urging of his rider. The sounds from both grew in intensity with every clop of the horse’s shoes.

“Yes, my faithful friend,” Sir Elliot said, “I believe a bottle of omeprazole would be most beneficial at this time.” They came to stop in front of the apothecary, and Sir Elliot slid off his saddle. As he opened the apothecary door, Sir Elliot turned back to Neigh-Neigh before disappearing inside. “I believe that dragons who eat giant lizard jerky on a regular basis must have horrible heartburn!”

The End

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These three pictures were texted to Jeannie. The first is of our adopted great-grandson, Elliot. (His mom was one of Stacie's students who has always called us Grandma and Grandpa Mac.) We had given him the little purple dragon and Elliot was taking him for a ride on his horse, Neigh-Neigh. The second photo is of the herd of elk we usually visit before church on Wednesday. Our pastor, Randy, and his wife Janet were there when Jeannie texted her that we were not going to make it due to the cold and cough she'd been nursing. Janet texted the photo of the elk to say they were all agreeing for Jeannie's healing. The last photo was from Dennis to make sure he was purchasing the right meds!

