

St. George and the Dragon

A legend

St. George travelled for many months by land and sea until he came to Libya. Here he met a poor hermit who told him that everyone in that land was in great distress, for a dragon had been terrorizing the inhabitants of the country.

'Every day,' said the old man, 'he demands the sacrifice of a beautiful maiden and now all the young girls have been killed. The king's daughter alone remains, and unless we can find a knight who can slay the dragon she will be sacrificed tomorrow. The king of Egypt will give his daughter in marriage to the champion who overcomes this terrible monster.'

When St. George heard this story, he was determined to try and save the princess, so he rested that night in the hermit's hut, and at daybreak set out to the valley where the dragon lived. When he drew near he saw a little procession of women, headed by a beautiful girl dressed in pure Arabian silk. The princess Sabra was being led by her attendants to the place of death. The knight urged his horse on and overtook the ladies. He comforted them with brave words and persuaded the princess to return to the palace. Then he entered the valley.

As soon as the dragon saw him it rushed from its cave, roaring with a sound louder than thunder. Its head was immense and its tail fifty feet long. But St. George was not afraid. He struck the monster with his spear, hoping he would wound it.

The dragon's scales were so hard that the spear broke into a thousand pieces and St. George fell from his horse. Fortunately he rolled under an enchanted orange tree which prevented the poison from taking effect, and the venomous dragon was unable to hurt him. Within a few minutes he had recovered his strength and was able to fight again.

He charged at the beast with his sword, but the dragon poured poison on him and his armour split in two. Once more he refreshed himself from the orange tree and then, with his sword in his hand, he rushed at the dragon and pierced it under the wing where there were no scales, so that it fell down dead at his feet.

Comprehension based on St. George and the Dragon

1. Put this sentence in your own words: *A dragon had been terrorizing the inhabitants of the country.*
2. St. George set out to the valley at daybreak. What time of day is that? Start your sentence with: Daybreak
3. *The dragon's scales were so hard that the spear broke into a thousand pieces and St. George fell from his horse.*
Which two words from the above sentence are a good example of the use of effective imagery and help to give a clear picture of what happened.
4. Effective use of imagery in writing often includes the use of adjectives. Rewrite the following sentence and underline the adjectives (describing words) which help to give the reader a vivid picture.
When he drew near he saw a little procession of women, headed by a beautiful girl dressed in pure Arabian silk.
5. Is the following sentence figurative or literal? *Its head was immense and its tail fifty feet long.*
6. *As soon as the dragon saw him it rushed from its cave, roaring with a sound louder than thunder.* Change 'roaring with a sound louder than thunder' into a simile.
7. How did St. George kill the dragon?

Total: 12

Spelling/Punctuation: ½

Grand total: 12 ½