

A Dragon's Ending

by Glynis Becker

The beast lay on the bed next to her. His enormous, scaly body had enveloped her much smaller one almost completely. There was only a sliver of daylight between them. He snored, puffs of air exiting his huge nostrils in disgusting, putrid breaths, continuous and rhythmic, filling the room with sickness and sorrow.

She was quiet. Her breath was also rhythmic, but softer. Still. With his tail curled around her chest, she could only inhale and exhale as was absolutely necessary.

A window opened to the outside, but only a tiny breeze made it through. When it did, there was no refreshment, just a slight stirring of the thick air inside, heavy with sadness and disease.

In a corner, propped against the wall sat a sword. The blade was worn and nicked, a delicate sword, etched with markings which were the result of many battles, a lifetime of victories both large and small. A sword made for a small person, weighty but usable, balanced precisely for the individual who would wield it. Hers had now seen a better day.

The family sat in the other room, talking quietly, making conversation. There was a heaviness in that room's air as well, evident in both the laughter and the tears. The family had seen this dragon before and knew that although he wouldn't be a permanent fixture in the house, this time he wouldn't be leaving alone.

They had seen their Healer do His work and they had faith He would somehow defeat this dragon as He had so many others. In fact, they were confident He was already there with Him, invisible, powerful, and waiting. They could feel His presence.

They were right. He was there. He moved through the room, smiling while they laughed. He touched their shoulders and wrapped His arms around them when they cried. He whispered words to them when they felt afraid. Because He knew them so well, He could give each the comfort they needed anytime they needed it.

And He was always, always, by the bedside.

He could be felt, in a more tangible way in that room where she lay, sitting in the corner next to the sword. He never touched her weapon; He simply sat with His back to the wall, knees up, head bowed, not in defeat--never defeat--but in prayer. He did not ignore the dragon, but the beast did not retain His attention for long. There was no need. The beast was only His partial concern.

His attention was on her. Always. He prayed that she not be afraid. He prayed that she would trust in His timing. He prayed that she would know His presence in this fight with her.

Then, in a heartbeat she was barely aware of, He stood. Her eyes widened to see Him push the window fully open and pick up her sword. He calmly stretched His hand to her and said, "Are you ready, child?"

She smiled and for the first time in months her breath came easily and her voice felt strong. Strength in her muscles renewed, she raised an arm to touch His hand. "I am. But won't I miss them? Will they miss me? I don't want them to be sad."

Compassion radiated from His expression when He smiled. "Yes, they will be sad. How could they not be? They love you. Grief is a privilege. It is the price of love in this broken world. But they love me, too, and they trust Me to take care of you just as you must be willing to let Me take care of them. Your family won't be apart forever." He took her weak, tiny hand inside His strong, steady one. "Do you trust Me?"

No pause before her answer. "Always."

With those words, the dragon stirred. The great tail, which had been wrapped around her, moved off and swept toward the Healer. Unconcerned for Himself, He barely moved, just let go of her hand, taking the sword in both of His. With a single stroke He slid it cleanly into the dragon's neck.

One howl, disturbing and pathetic, and the monster turned to ash, blowing into the breeze that had washed through the window.

He smiled, sheathed her small sword in His own scabbard and held out His hand again. "This dragon is defeated. Now it is time for you to come with Me."

She took His hand, and the sickness left her. She rose, renewed of both body and spirit.

They turned toward that familiar window, with its familiar view. But it was no longer what it had been. The window had become a radiant jewel, a portal opening to a place she'd never seen. The dimness of the sunlight had been replaced with something much brighter and infinitely sweeter.

That pure and perfect light streaming in on them held peace and safety and healing and life.

Everlasting.

Author's note

This was written during my mother's time of home hospice care in the summer of 2020. She was valiant in her fight and strong in her faith. For those she left behind (the 'stronger ones', she called us) Mom was the embodiment of the reassurance that what God has said is true and if we trust Him He is faithful to carry us to Himself as we leave this life. She is now in His presence with the multitude of saints and we will see her again.

If you have any question about what will happen when you die, please take time to read The Gospel of John in the Scriptures. If your soul needs to be settled, this will bring you peace. "*Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.*" (John 14:1)

Blessings, Glynis