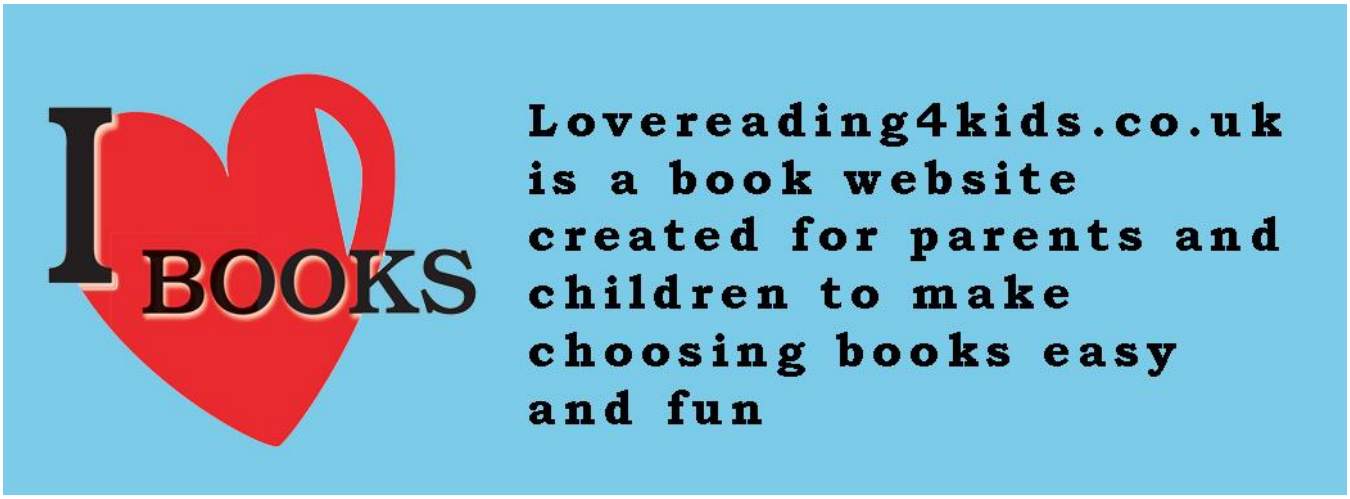


Opening extract from

Knighthood for Beginners

Written and illustrated by

Elys Dolan

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THIS IS FOR MOUTHWASH, SNAKES AND LADDERS, ANYONE WEARING A SPECIAL HAT, AND EVERYONE WHO'S AS DYSLEXIC AS I AM.



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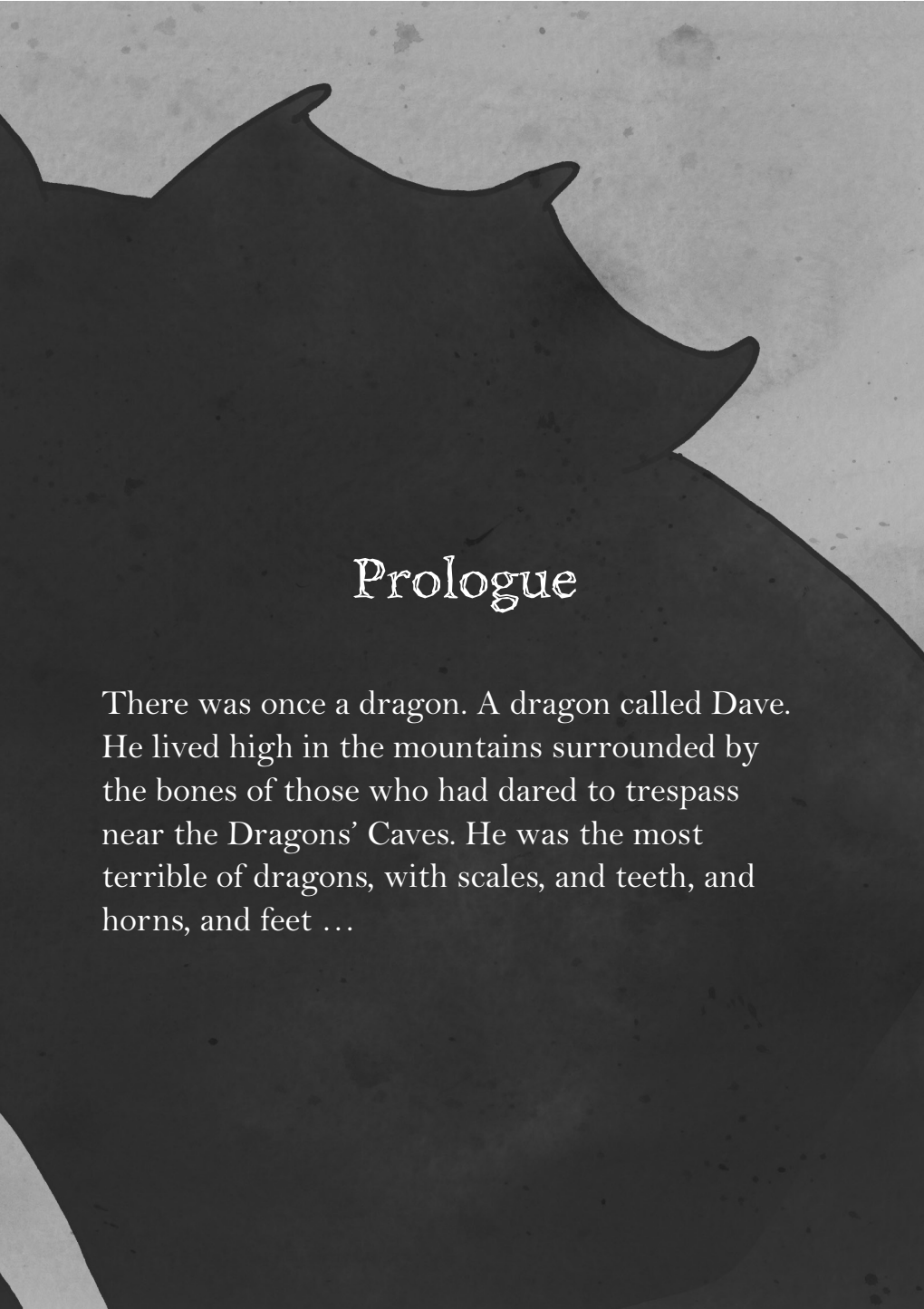
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Prologue

There was once a dragon. A dragon called Dave. He lived high in the mountains surrounded by the bones of those who had dared to trespass near the Dragons' Caves. He was the most terrible of dragons, with scales, and teeth, and horns, and feet …

. . . no, wait. Hang on a minute. I don't mean *that* kind of terrible. I mean he was terrible at being a dragon.

You see all dragons must abide by Dragon Lore.

A Dragon must hoard gold, gems, and all riches.
He must manage it wisely and keep it tidy.

A Dragon shall riddle and riddle with vigour!

A Dragon must feast on nothing but villages.

A Dragon must knit, because of all the handicrafts,
knitting is the fiercest.

To be honest no one really understands the knitting bit but they do it anyway because that's the way it's always been.

Every dragon must master the Lore by the time they come of age and take their Dragon Test. When he's passed the test a young dragon will receive his certificate and become a fully licensed dragon.



No one has ever failed.
But Dave might be the first.

He'd been up all night studying and first thing that morning Dave's parents came in and said they needed to have a 'serious talk'.



'Listen Dave,' said his fearsome father. 'As you know you come from a very old dragon family. We're a proud line of the most dragony of dragons. There was your grandfather who had the biggest hoard since records began, Cousin Myrtle who once ate six villages in a row, and your Uncle Kevin who knitted that lovely hat.'



'What we're trying to say,' said Dave's massive green mother, 'is that you've had the finest education, the best knitting tutor a gold hoard can buy, we've taken you to gourmet villages, and taught you our most cryptic riddles. We've tried our best to make sure you're ready, but your father and I both know you've never been the most talented dragon.'

'You spend too much time reading those books and not enough time actually being a dragon!' said Father.

Dave has a bit of a thing about books. It all started when Dave was a baby and his parents went on a village-tasting tour. They left him with his Great Aunt Maud who was a librarian. (Even dragons need librarians.)

