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Opening extract from

George and the Knight

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Long ago, when the tallest oaks were nothing more than tiny acorns, **brave dragons** roamed a distant land.

The dragons were fearsome and mighty,

but George was different.

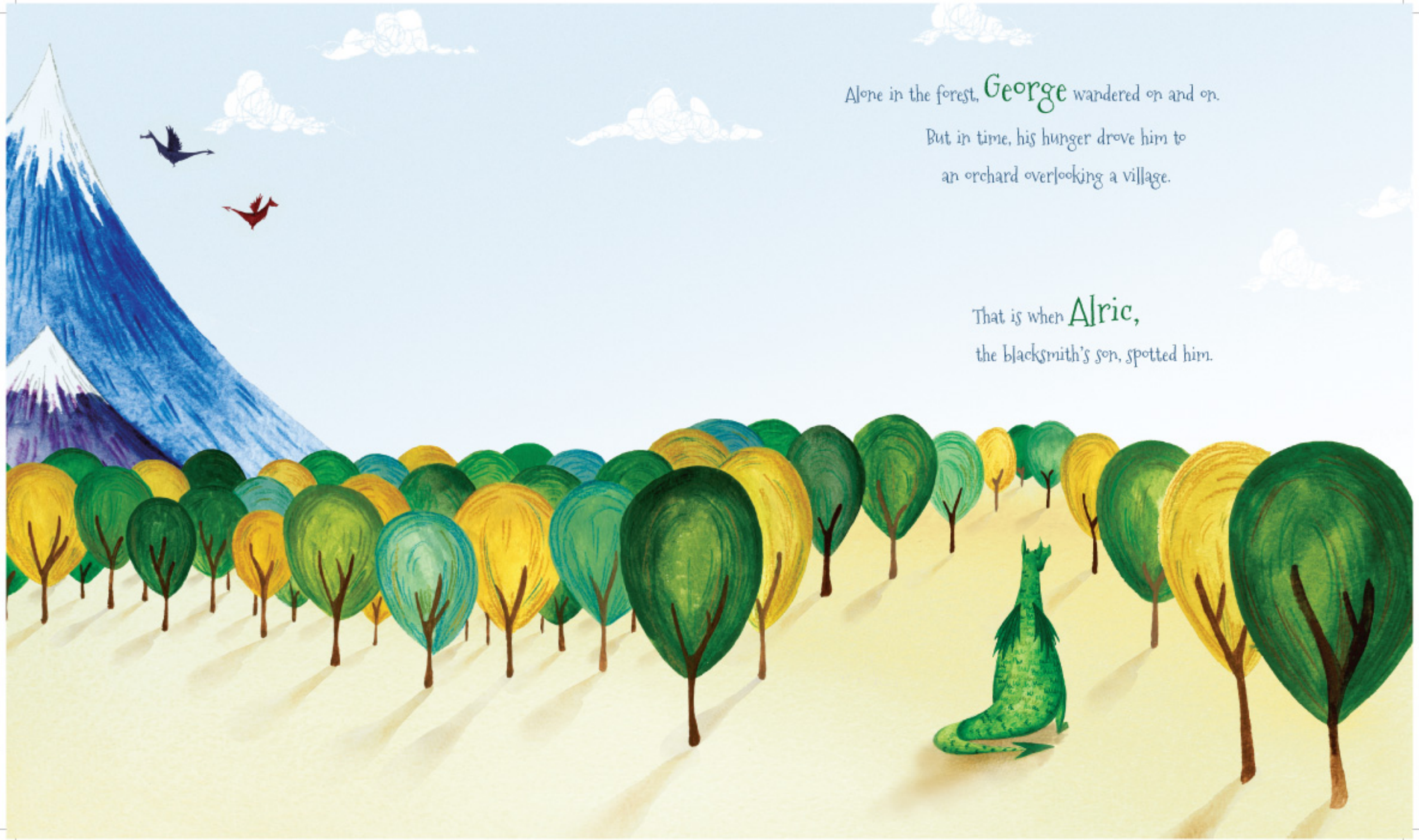
He did not wish to be fearsome. He was not mighty.

George was kind and gentle.

All the dragons were ashamed of him. They tried and tried to make George brave, but it was no good.



Finally, they decided that George must go.
He was banished from the mountain and told
never to return again.



Alone in the forest, George wandered on and on.
But in time, his hunger drove him to
an orchard overlooking a village.

That is when Alric,
the blacksmith's son, spotted him.

The boy did not run

when he saw the dragon, but gazed in awe

at the beautiful scales and softly whispered,

"Wow!"

George was startled. He let out a puff of grey smoke.

"D-d-d-don't hurt m-m-m-me,"

he stuttered.

"How can you be afraid of me?
I thought dragons were fearless!?"

"I'm afraid of everything."

George blushed.

"And for that reason,
I cannot return home."

"Are you a fire-breathing dragon?" asked Alric.

"Oh yes," replied George. "All dragons are."

"Can you show me?" the boy urged.

George opened his mouth and sent a scorching fire onto a nearby log. It burst into bright, hot flames.



"Amazing!" cried Alric.

"That gives me an idea! Come with me!"



So Alric led George to the village, where his father was hard at work.