

'Bring Eionon here, Bowen,' said the queen.

The knight carried Eionon in his arms and put him down on the ground. The dragon's face was high above him. It was very ugly – brown and black, with a large mouth, big teeth, and sad eyes. Bowen felt very afraid – he never took his eyes away from that face!

The dragon looked down at Eionon. 'It's King Freyne's son!' he said. 'I hated the king. He loved killing dragons and peasants. What do you want from me, Queen Aislinn?'

'I want your help,' answered the queen. 'A peasant hurt my child in the battle. Eionon's not the same as his father, Great Dragon. This knight, Sir Bowen, is teaching him the Old Code. And I'm going to teach him about dragons in the future. Please help him.'

'You're asking a lot, Madam. Your son's very ill,' said the dragon.



*The dragon's face was high above Bowen.*

'I know,' cried the queen. 'But he's king now. He'll be a good king. Sir Bowen and I will help him. He won't be cruel, Great Dragon.'

'He has to say that, not *you*,' answered the dragon. Then he looked at Bowen. 'Give me your sword, Knight.'

Bowen pulled out his sword and gave it to the dragon. The dragon stood over Eionon, with the sword in his hands. The boy opened his eyes. He saw the dragon, and tried to move away.

'Don't be afraid, son,' said the queen quietly. 'The Great Dragon's going to help you.'

'I *will* help you, boy. But first you have to say these words: "I won't be a cruel king. I won't kill dragons and peasants. I'll love my people and be kind to them. I'll always live by the Old Code." Now, are you ready? Repeat them after me!'

Eionon was very tired, but he repeated the dragon's words. Then he fell back into Bowen's arms.

'Eionon, Eionon!' shouted Bowen. 'No, no! He's dead!' Bowen was very angry and tried to pull his sword away from the dragon.

But the dragon shouted, 'Knight of the Old Code. Stop! Watch me! Now!' Then he pushed Bowen's sword into his heart! A red light came out of the dragon. He caught the light in his hands and turned to Eionon. 'This light's half my heart, boy. I'm giving it to you. It'll make you strong. Enjoy a long life and always remember the words of the Old Code.'

Eionon's eyes slowly opened. He felt weak, but he wasn't dead. Bowen looked at the boy, then he looked up at the dragon. 'I'm sorry, Great Dragon. I was angry and afraid. Thank you.'

'You can help Eionon now, Sir Bowen. Teach him the Old Code well. Never forget my words.'

Before Bowen could answer, the dragon went back into the mountain. Everything was dark and cold again. Nobody spoke – they listened to the sound of the strange, sad music.