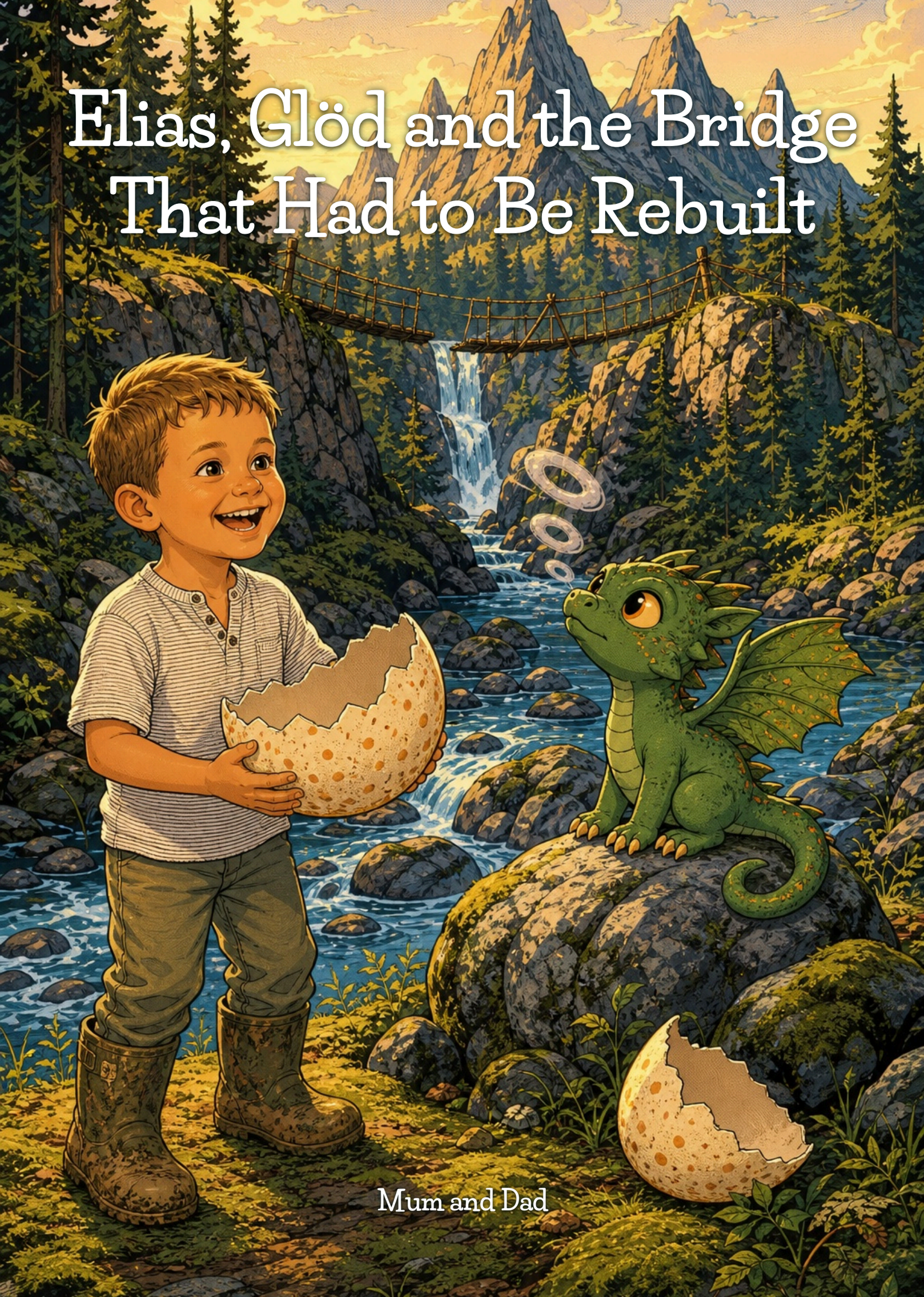
Elias, Glöd and the Bridge That Had to Be Rebuilt



Mum and Dad

This book belongs to

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Welcome to this sample book! It is made just as your own will be, from the photos and choices shown beside it, and shows what a story from Saga to You can look like. Turn the pages, read, and imagine your child as the hero of their very own tale.

Behind the house, the stream ran over flat stones and beneath a root that looked like a crooked nose. Elias was looking for straight sticks for the wall of his den. A den needed sticks that held together, not sticks that went crack the moment you looked at them.

Between two stones lay something round and large. It was too big to be a bird and too warm to be a stone. Elias put both hands around the shell. Its coppery spots gleamed. From inside came a sound: crack. Then: crack, crack. Elias held the egg still. What could be about to come out in the stream behind the house?





First, a green snout came out through the crack. Then came two round eyes, four little claws and a tail that accidentally knocked over a leaf. The little dragon sneezed. Poof! Three grey smoke rings floated over the water and caught around the tip of a reed.

“Glöd,” said Elias. The dragon looked at the rings, folded down his leaf-like wings and blew another one, even smaller. On the inside of the shell were three little peaks and a line of tiny letters: A baby dragon must be home when the sun sets behind three peaks. Elias looked up. Far away, above the trees, were three mountain peaks. The sun had already begun to sink. “Dragon Mountain,” he said. “Come on!”

The forest beyond the stream was dark beneath the fir trees, even though the sky above was still bright. Elias walked between roots that crept across the path. Glöd sat on his shoulder, holding on to the seam of his jumper with two little claws.

At every fork in the path, Glöd blew a smoke ring. The first settled around a mushroom. The second whooshed into a bush. The third shot straight up and vanished. "Let's look at the shell instead," said Elias, holding up the three peaks. He looked for a gap between the trees in the same direction. Then there came a thump, splash, thump from farther ahead. The ground was covered in enormous round footprints.





In the biggest footprint floated three pine needles and a beetle paddling with all its legs. Elias put his shoe beside it. It looked like a tiny raisin. Glöd blew a smoke ring into the puddle. The ring rose up again, round and neat.

"A giant has gone the same way as us," said Elias. The footprints led to the rapids. There, the bridge hung between the cliffs, with ropes as thick as plaits. Several planks were missing in the middle of the bridge. The water foamed far below, and the sun had turned orange at the edge. Elias pressed his lips together. "Try, look, rebuild," he said. "First we have to mend the bridge."

Elias climbed onto a low, fallen tree trunk a little way from the edge. From there, he could see the whole bridge without having to step onto it. The planks that were still there were held in place with wooden pegs and rope. On the ground lay two straight branches, some old rope and a few pegs that must have come loose long ago.

Glöd blew a smoke ring through the gap. It slipped straight between the two side ropes and dissolved on the other side. "Just wide enough," said Elias. He laid the branches beside each other, tested them with his hand and began tying. A little piece of bridge began to grow on the ground. It almost looked like a wall in his den. Almost.





Elias pulled the last knot tight. Then he and Glöd carefully pushed the piece of bridge out towards the gap. At first, it lay still between the ropes. Elias had time to think: It'll probably hold.

Then the shortest branch bent. Crack. The rope slipped. The bridge twisted like a fish on a hook and splashed down into the rapids. One rope danced after it like a wet worm. Glöd blew a little smoke ring, but it broke apart before it had time to become round. Elias looked at the sun. It was down by the treetops now. He wanted to pull at the rope again, harder and harder. Instead, he sat on the fallen trunk and looked. From there, he saw something else.

In his den, Elias usually made walls with three sticks: two that leaned together and one that held them in place. A triangle did not wobble like a row of sticks. He pulled over the two longest branches and laid them with their tips touching.

"Try, look, rebuild," he said. Glöd sent three smoke rings towards the ropes. The first flew through an empty hole. The second caught around a loose knot. The third turned just where Elias held the triangle. "There!" He pulled the knot tight, put on the last plank and gave the support a gentle tug. It stayed still. On the other side of the bridge, a cave mouth gaped between the rocks.





On the other side of the bridge, the path went straight into a cave. A few steps in, crystals stood in clusters: thin as icicles, wide as chair legs, crooked as twisted teeth. They were dark, though now and then a point still held a tiny warm glimmer.

By the wall stood a stone sign, almost covered in dust. It said: Warm dragon breath wakes crystal light. Not fire. Not a torch. Only warm breath. Farther in, the passage bent away from all daylight. It was as black as the inside of a closed box. Soon, somebody's hand would find the sign.

Elias took one step inside and could not even see his own fingers. Glöd gave a little squeak and pressed his warm green side against Elias's shoe. Elias felt along the wall until his fingers found the letters on the stone sign.

"Warm dragon breath," he read. Glöd looked at his snout and blew a teeny-tiny smoke ring at a crystal. Elias cupped his hands behind the snout so that the warmth would not rush off in every direction. The crystal blinked once. Then it glowed green from within. "Try, look, rebuild," said Elias. Glöd took a deeper breath. A new crystal lit up farther ahead. Then another. But the path soon bent again.





The crystals shone only as far as Glöd's warm puffs could reach. When Glöd needed a rest, they stopped beside a blue crystal that glowed on one side and yellow on the other. Elias counted to three and pointed. "There, there, there."

Around the next bend, one crystal was completely covered in brown mud. Glöd blew, but a sad smoke ring fell to the ground. Elias took a twig and carefully scraped away the mud. Not too deep. Not too quickly. When the surface shone, Glöd warmed it with a little puff. Light raced through the crystal and showed a narrow exit. Outside, three rocky peaks could be seen. But would anyone up there see Glöd?

They came out just as the sun lay like an orange disc between the trees. In front of them stood Dragon Mountain with its three peaks. In its side was an opening so large that a cloud could nearly have flown inside.

Glöd stopped on the path. He blew a smoke ring towards the opening. It grew thinner and thinner and vanished before it reached it. Elias took out one half of the eggshell. The coppery spots made three peaks, just like the mountain. By the path, three crystals stuck up from the ground: one small, one medium and one tall. Elias crouched down. “We don’t need to shout,” he said. “We can build something that blinks.”





Elias laid the crystals on a flat stone: small, medium, tall. Like Dragon Mountain. Glöd warmed the small one first. Then the medium one. Last of all, the tall one. Three lights blinked in the twilight, clear even from far away.

Something moved inside the opening. A large snout came out. Then another, and several friendly dragon heads with calm eyes. A broad paw landed on the stone beside Glöd without touching him. Glöd blew a smoke ring straight up. Everyone saw it. The big dragons answered with soft puffs that made the three crystals sparkle. Glöd ran forward, but turned back towards Elias and the shell.

One of the big dragons pushed a scale across the stone. It shimmered green, copper and blue, like the stream when the sun shone on it. Glöd took the scale between his claws and placed it in Elias's hand.

"It can live in my den," said Elias. He turned for home, towards the bridge, the forest and the stream behind the house. Behind him came a little snort. Elias looked over his shoulder. Glöd stood by the opening, with the big dragons behind him. No smoke ring came from his snout. A small, steady flame curled up into the evening air and sparkled in the scale in Elias's hand.



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Elias finds a big, warm egg among the stones in the stream behind the house, and from it hatches Glöd: a little green dragon who can only blow smoke rings. Before the sun disappears behind Dragon Mountain's three peaks, they must mend a broken bridge, wake crystals in a black cave and show that Glöd has come home.

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