

Exemplar Stories – My Father’s Dragon

Gannett, Ruth Stiles. *My Father’s Dragon*. Illustrated by Ruth Chrisman Gannett. New York: Random House, 1948. (1948).

From Chapter Seven “My Father Meets a Lion”

“Who are you?” the lion yelled at my father.

“My name is Elmer Elevator.”

“Where do you think you are going?”

“I’m going home,” said my father.

“That’s what you think!” said the lion. “Ordinarily I’d save you for afternoon tea, but I happen to be upset enough and hungry enough to eat you right now.” And he picked up my father in his front paws to feel how fat he was.

My father said, “Oh, please, Lion, before you eat me, tell me why you are so particularly upset today.”

“It’s my mane,” said the lion, as he was figuring out how many bites a little boy would make. “You see what a dreadful mess it is, and I don’t seem to be able to do anything about it. My mother is coming over on the dragon this afternoon, and if she sees me this way I’m afraid she’ll stop my allowance. She can’t stand messy manes! But I’m going to eat you now, so it won’t make any difference to you.”

“Oh, wait a minute,” said my father, “and I’ll give you just the things you need to make your mane a tidy and beautiful. I have them here in my pack.”

“You do?” said the lion, “Well, give them to me, and perhaps I’ll save you for afternoon tea after all,” and he put my father down on the ground.”

My father opened the pack and took out the comb and the brush and the seven hair ribbons of different colors. “Look,” he said, “I’ll show you what to do on your forelock, where you can watch me. First you brush a while, and then you comb, and then you brush again until all the twigs and snarls are gone. Then you divide it up into three and braid it like this and tie a ribbon around the end.”

As my father was doing this, the lion watched very carefully and began to look much happier. When my father tied the ribbon he was all smiles. “Oh, that’s wonderful, really wonderful!” said the lion. “Let me have the comb and brush and see if I can do it.” So my father gave him the

comb and brush and the lion began busily grooming his mane. As a matter of fact, he was so busy that he didn't even know when my father left.

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