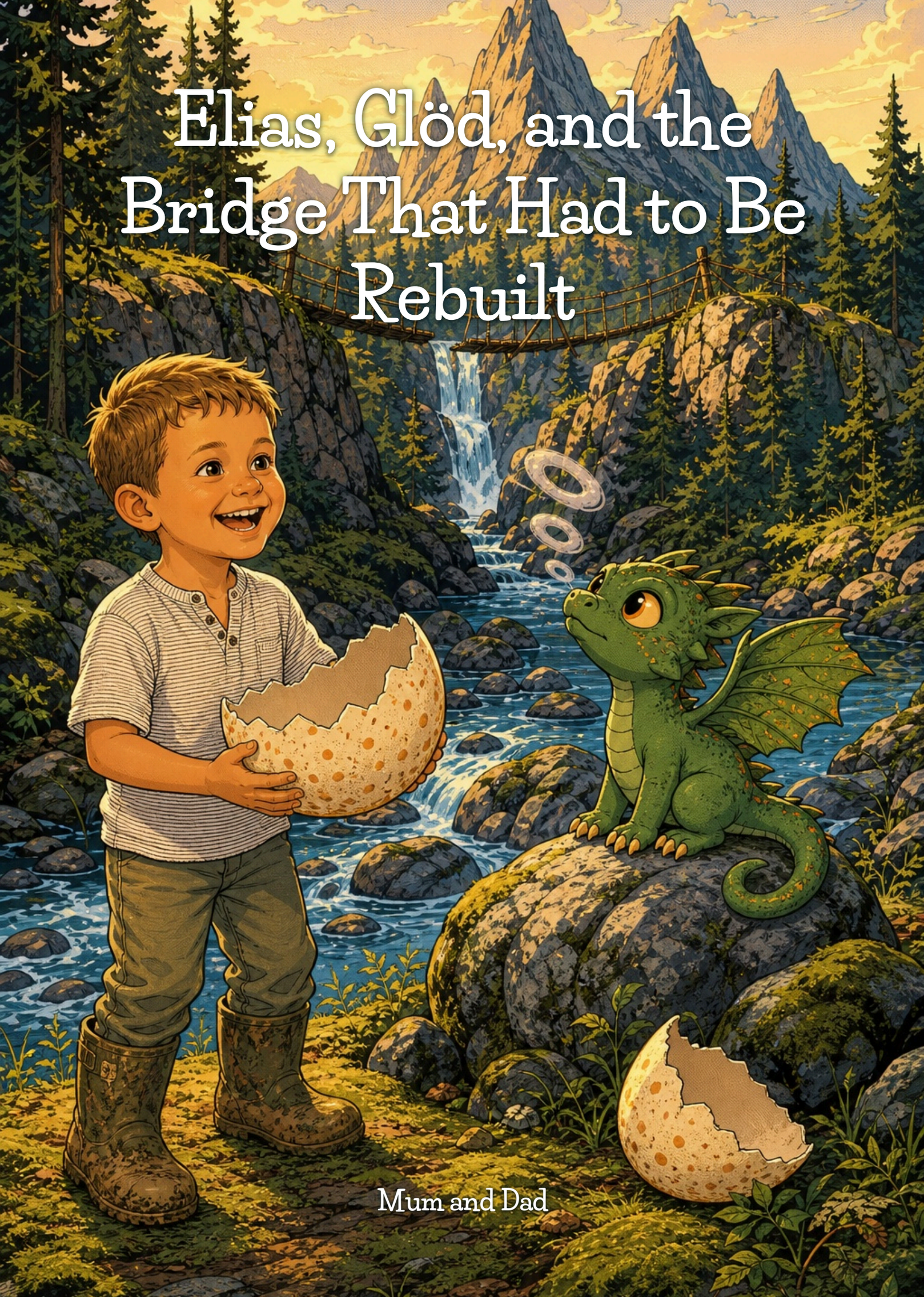

Elias, Glöd, and the Bridge That Had to Be Rebuilt
Mum and Dad







This book belongs to

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Welcome to this sample book! It's made just like your own will be, using the photos and choices shown alongside 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 adventure.





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 fort. A fort needed sticks that stayed together, not sticks that went crack the moment you looked at them.

Between two stones lay something round and big. It was too big for a bird and too warm for a stone. Elias put both hands around the shell. Its copper-colored spots glimmered. 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 poked out of the crack. Then came two round eyes, four little claws, and a tail that happened to tip over a leaf. The little dragon sneezed. Poof! Three gray smoke rings floated over the water and got 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. Inside 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 mountaintops. The sun had already started to sink. "Dragon Mountain," he said. "Come on!"

The forest beyond the stream was dark beneath the spruce trees, even though the sky overhead was still bright. Elias walked between roots that crept across the path. Glöd sat on his shoulder, gripping the seam of his shirt with two tiny 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 upward and disappeared. “Let’s look at the shell instead,” said Elias, holding up the three peaks. He searched for a gap between the trees in the same direction. Then there came a thump, splash, thump from farther ahead. The ground was covered with 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 raisin next to it. Glöd blew a smoke ring down into the puddle. The ring rose again, round and neat.

“A giant has gone the same way as us,” said Elias. The footprints led to the rapids. There, a bridge hung between the cliffs, its ropes as thick as braids. Several planks were missing in the middle. 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 fix 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 fastened with wooden pegs and rope. On the ground lay two straight branches, 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 vanished on the other side. "Just wide enough," said Elias. He laid the branches side by side, tested them with his hand, and began to tie. A little piece of bridge took shape on the ground. It looked almost like a wall in his fort. Almost.





Elias tightened the final knot. Then he and Glöd carefully pushed the piece of bridge out toward the gap. At first, it lay still between the ropes. Elias had time to think: It will 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 small smoke ring, but it broke apart before it could become round. Elias looked at the sun. It was down by the treetops now. He wanted to pull the rope again, harder and harder. Instead, he sat on the fallen trunk and looked. From there, he saw something else.

In his fort, Elias usually made walls with three sticks: two that leaned and one that held them together. A triangle didn't wobble like a row of sticks. He pulled over the two longest branches and placed them with their tips touching.

"Try, look, rebuild," he said. Glöd sent three smoke rings toward the ropes. The first flew through an empty hole. The second got caught around a loose knot. The third turned right where Elias held the triangle. "There!" He tightened the knot, put on the final plank, and tugged gently on the support. It stayed still. On the other side of the bridge, a cave mouth yawned 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 bent teeth. They were dark, though here and there a point still held a tiny warm glimmer.

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

Elias took one step inside and couldn't 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 Glöd's snout so the warmth would not fly 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 soon, the path curved again.





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

At the next bend, a 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 fast. 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 disk between the trees. In front of them stood Dragon Mountain with its three peaks. In its side was an opening so big that a cloud could almost have flown inside.

Glöd stopped on the path. He blew a smoke ring toward the opening. It grew thinner and thinner and disappeared before it reached it. Elias took out one half of the eggshell. The copper-colored spots made three peaks, just like the mountain. By the path, three crystals poked 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. At last, the tall one. Three lights blinked in the twilight, clear even from far away.

Something moved inside the opening. A big 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 toward 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 fort," said Elias. He turned toward home, toward 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.



Elias, Glöd, and the Bridge That Had to Be Rebuilt

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

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