



## Emily's Very Own Bedtime Story

By Juliana Carter



Emily's dad was sitting at his desk at home when he felt a tug at his shirt. "Daddy, tell me a bedtime story. Please, please, please."

Mr. Granger glanced at his watch and then at the stack of papers in front of him. He had brought work home with him again. He had a very important job working as the bookkeeper for a construction company. His company built tall buildings downtown and amusement parks. His job was to keep track of all of the money going in and out of his company.

Sometimes Emily's dad took her to work with him to different job sites and she watched the men with their hard hats and big yellow boots. They were always happy to see her and would give her a little wave. "Good to see you today, Emily. I hope you're keeping your dad out of trouble," they would joke. Emily liked going to work with her dad. On the way home they would stop and get an ice cream cone. Emily's favorite flavor was nutty coconut.

Tonight Emily's mom was teaching a class about computers at the local adult school. She usually told Emily her bedtime stories, and when she did, she told them just the way Emily liked them. Earlier that day she had told Emily to be good for her dad and that she would be home in time to tuck her in for the night.

Mr. Granger thought for a bit.

"Let's see," he scratched his head. "How about a story about dragons?"

"Too scary," Emily said.

"Hmmm. How about a very nice dragon who wore braces and felt embarrassed because none of his dragon friends had braces on their fangs?"

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"That does sound silly, Daddy. Okay, tell me about the dragon with braces on his fangs. But not too scary; okay?"

And this is how his story went:

Once upon a time, there was a young dragon named Henry. He had two older sisters, who were usually very nice to him. His mom and dad worked as security guards for the local castle.

When it was time for Henry to go to the dentist for his routine fang de-scaling, the dentist told him he needed braces on his fangs or else he would have a terrible overbite. After Henry got his braces, they felt funny in his mouth. When he ran his tongue over his fangs, it felt bumpy and not quite right at all. The orthodontist told Henry there would be no gum chewing while he wore his braces, and this made Henry very depressed.

Henry was afraid to go to school the next day because he thought his classmates would tease him. His parents told him not to worry; that lots of young dragons are wearing braces on their fangs these days. His sisters, being generally very nice, reassured him. "You don't look bad at all, Henry. In fact, we think you look cute."

"Ugh," thought Henry. He was not convinced.

The next day, the other young dragons didn't tease Henry at all. In fact, they thought his braces were cool. He had gotten red and yellow rubber bands around them, so when he opened his mouth, it looked like he was breathing fire.

"I liked that story," said Emily. "Will I have to wear braces some day?"

"Maybe," said her dad.

"Well, if I do, I won't be afraid."

"You're very brave," said Mr. Granger as he tucked her in.

"And, Daddy, you can tell me a story any time."

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