**Jane and the Dragon – condensed version**

Jane was expected to learn to sew and serve the royal family, just like her mother. The problem was, Jane hated sewing and all inside chores. She was distracted by the knights down in the courtyard practicing their swordplay and longed to be one of them.

Jane told her father she wanted to be a knight. He laughed and said “Only boys can become knights.”

She tried to appeal to the King, then the Prince, then the knights. They all laughed at her as though she was crazy.

Finally, she told the jester. He did not laugh or make fun of her. He opened his wooden chest and showed her a small suit of armor. “I wanted to be a knight as well, but I was too small. This armor is my secret. I put it on sometimes…and dream a little. I want you to have it.”

Jane was overjoyed. “But what about your dream?” she asked.

“I was never really brave enough,” he said. “You dream it for me.”

Jane started practicing. She practiced her swordplay and her horseplay.

One terrible day, an enormous green dragon came and stole the Prince. The King and the Queen were horrified. They called for the knights, but they were away. “Who will rescue our son?” cried the King.

They were very surprised when a small knight emerged on the Prince’s pony and galloped away after the dragon!

“Release the boy!” she demanded.

“Make me!” he roared through his hot breath.

Jane drew her sword, and the battle was on, but neither one was willing to finish the other.

“You could have killed me,” said the dragon. “Why didn’t you?”

“You could have killed ME” said Jane. “Why didn’t you?”

“I don’t like hurting people,” sighed the dragon.

“Then why did you steal the Prince?” asked Jane.

“Because it is expected of me.”

“Then do the unexpected,” said Jane.

“No, no! I’m not…brave enough. It’s easy for you. You’re a knight. People expect you to be brave.”

Jane laughed and took off her helmet.

“You’re just a girl. I could fry you for breakfast.”

“Yes. That would be expected. They expect me to be a lady-in-waiting, but I want to be a knight. What do you want?”

“I want to be loved,” sobbed the dragon.

Okay. I’ll love you, and I’ll come visit you sometimes, but right now I have to take the Prince home.”

The entire court came out to greet them. The King and Queen were overjoyed to see their son – but who was the mysterious knight?

Jane took off her helmet. The crowd gasped. Her mother fainted. Her father just stood there with his mouth wide open.

“Your Majesty, I would like to become a proper knight, please.”

“Certainly, certainly,” said the King, and it was done.

“Thank your for the dream” said the jester, who was almost as proud of Jane as she was of herself.