



How to Slay a Dragon

Bill Allen

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Ruuan is a very large dragon. Twelve-year-old Greg Hart can't slay a dragon. He'd be lucky to win a fight against one of the smaller girls at school.

Now the magicians of Myrth have mistaken him for a legendary warrior, so they've yanked Greg into their world of sorcery and danger. Nothing will stop the people of Myrth from believing Greg will rescue King Peter's daughter from Ruuan the dragon. After all, Greg has been named in a prophecy, and no prophecy has ever been wrong before.

Until now.

How to Slay a Dragon Details

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Author : Bill Allen

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From Reader Review How to Slay a Dragon for online ebook

Miranda says

3.5 stars

Kristina Cardoza says

Summary

How to Slay a Dragon by Bill Allen is a fun, action-packed fantasy you'll definitely love! Greg Hart, besides the fact that he's one of the scrawniest boys at his school, is a normal boy in a normal world with a normal life.

...Until now.

Greg is being taken to the fantasy world of Myrth, and if it isn't bad enough being on a medieval planet with ogres, trolls, and witches, he is named in a prophecy (as Greghart, though, not Greg Hart) and it is foretold that he is to slay a dragon to save the princess!

Can Greg make it through the crazy mix-up without being scorched to ashes?

About the Author

Bill Allen may be described as an unusual man who has accomplished an unusual many deeds. In fact, it has been said that if you total up all the things he claims to have done, he cannot possibly be less than seven hundred years old.

No one knows if this is true. All that is certain is that for much of that time he's been living in Melbourne, Florida with his wife, Nancy, writing software by day and, well, mostly sleeping by night. Every now and again he writes stories, too. [from <http://www.billallenbooks.com/author.htm>]

My Opinion

The story was really fast-paced and exciting--I protested when I had to stop reading and go to bed! The story showed that you can do anything as long as you have the courage. Greg showed his courage in the end with the dragon. I was surprised in the ending, too--it had a surprising, unexpected twist to it--but was fascinated by Greg's way of fulfilling the prophecy! (Hint: You will NOT expect what's coming. :))

I received a copy of this eBook for free from Bell Bridge Books through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. I received no other compensation.

Blog Posts:

How to Slay a Dragon

How to Slay a Dragon

Kristina Cardoza

Children's Book Author

Reading Vacation says

Greg and I have something in common. We are both small for our age. It is not something that I let get in my way, and neither does Greg. When he is named by a prophecy to be the one to slay Ruuan the dragon,

Greg must face his fears and do the right thing. It's a matter of knowing what the right thing is that makes this story so interesting. Greg grows in confidence and he learns that he has much more to offer than he ever thought possible.

I enjoyed reading about Greg's adventures in Myrth – a mythical land where dragons, trolls, and ogres can be found. Bill Allen's descriptions of Myrth added to the magical feel to this story. He made Myrth seem so real, but not too scary for a younger reader.

My favorite part of the story would be the final outcome. I did NOT see that coming and it was the perfect ending. Middle graders, especially boys, will have fun learning how Greg slays a dragon. It's a nice story.

RATING

3 So-So

COVER COMMENTS

Look at Ruuan the dragon. He looks mysterious with all those complex scales. Cool. I like that the background looks like parchment since the series is called The Journals of Myrth. I also like that the font is younger looking for this middle grade book. Nice!

Gmr says

Have you ever heard it's all in what you say...or rather how it's perceived? Mistaken meanings happen EVERY DAY. Online, in person, in text, on the phone, you name it and someone has mistaken the meaning of what someone has said for something completely different...for better or worse. Such is the case here for our young "hero" (champion or sandwich?), Greg Hart of Earth who apparently is the long sought champion-to-be of Myrth in lieu of another by a similar name that happens to fight dragons every other day. (Are you with me so far? Good.) Hmm...interesting coincidence? I don't know....the circumstances under which the prophecy was obtained are rather sketchy to say the least but then again stranger (odd or person?) things have happened.

Massively fun word play is the name of the game and it runs amuck throughout the story. Hear and their...or rather HERE and THERE you can find it on almost everyone page; a cornucopia of English class fun if I do say so myself. I can certainly see this working in a classroom setting as a great learning assignment to illustrate proper word usage. But anyhow, aside from the nerdy wordy fun, there is the adventure itself.

Greg Hart (or is that Greghart as all the people of Myrth believe his name to be?) is a likable character, as is Lucky, Priscilla, and a slue of other friendly types met along the way. Even the not-quite-as-friendly (or helpful) ones are great...like the Witch Hazel (ha, get it?!) and Simon Sezxrthm (Simon Sez for short....ha!)....each adding a little something special to the story in their own way of course. Every one he encounters on his journey brings a little mischief to the overall prophecy as it unfolds before their eyes and you can guarantee that while being engrossed in thoughts of just what might happen next (and laughing at all the "inside" jokes you uncover), you'll be taken by surprise as the unseen path is followed. It's not a book that leaves its potential outcomes wide open for you to gawk and stare at, no sir. You have selectively pick it out of the proverbial haystack, or merely let it run its course and hold on tight....me, I prefer the second method here.

In short (length not height), a wordy adventure into the realm of fantasy steeped with enough action to draw you in and enough word play to keep you thinking (and laughing) along the way. I for one thoroughly enjoyed this romp through the land of Myrth and can not wait for our next chance to visit them once again.

Book Bunny says

From the Book Bunny's own review site: HoorayforYa.com

One of the best things on a quiet Friday night to yourself is the opportunity to cuddle with a good book. Last night, I made use of the new Kindle Lending Library to borrow *How to Slay a Dragon* by Bill Allen (Bell Bridge, 2011). Even though I can only borrow one book a month on my one month free trial of Amazon Prime (Surprise! That's how they get you!) I definitely plan on buying upcoming books in this series (again, they got me!).

I'm not sure why I've been drifting more to elevated middle-grade books these days, but I like what I read. Allen's book quickly transports readers into the tree house of seventh-grader Greg Hart – a short, gangly boy who spends his time writing fantastical adventures, constantly gets picked on by bullies like Manny Malice, and is invisible to all female cuteness. Just as he's about to be pounded on by his arch nemesis – WHOOSH! – Greg is teleported via magic to a fantasy land called Myrth that is like something out of his own journal of adventures. This book is full of a great deal of WHOOSHes. And it moves quick. All of a sudden, Greg finds out he's the famed Greghart from a mysterious prophecy that claims he's out to slay a dragon. There's just one problem – Greg Hart is actually two words and he's never slain a dragon before. With much pushing and prodding, Greg is coerced into his predicted journey and meets a molten lava path, shrieking shrubbery, witches, shadowcats, a bollywomp, spirelings, and yes, a 300-foot dragon.

It's a fast trip through Myrth, and there's hardly time to stop and check out the scenery, but Allen's imagination runs wild with the characters and the fun plot. Probably the best part is the wordplay. Greghart vs Greateheart, Earth vs Myrth, Simon Sez, and almost every chapter uses the word "Hart" (Hart of the Matter, Reunion of the Hart). There's lots of light sarcasm, which makes the book fun and keeps it moving quickly (WHOOSH!) and makes it the perfect choice for reluctant (and dorky mid-20s) readers.

Jenny Rose says

I stumbled on *How to Slay a Dragon* by Bill Allen as a freebie. Greg Hart is a small, skinny boy who loves to write imaginative stories which make him the hero of mythical, medieval adventures. He is bullied by a typical bully—Manny “Malice.” One encounter with Manny is interrupted as Greg is transported to the planet Myrth to fulfill a prophecy.

At times this story reminded me of *Pilgrim’s Progress* and at others it reminded me a little of *Star Wars*. It is a definite page turner as the author leaves you hanging at the end of each chapter forcing you on. I would think this is perfect for 8-12 year-old boys, though girls who enjoy medieval adventure would probably enjoy it as well.

Michelle Isenhoff says

I happened onto this book during a free promo and approached it very cautiously. You see, about five percent of the books I find for free do I actually finish—or even get beyond page fifteen. This one looked cute, however, and I was impressed with the sample text, so I settled in for a longer read. It ended up being a wonderful surprise!

Within, Greg Hart is about to start seventh grade, and he’s not really looking forward to it. True, he is the fastest kid in his class, but that’s mainly because he’s had so much practice fleeing dangers like Manny Malice. And he’s got a great imagination. His journal is filled with the feats of daring he’s accomplished in his own mind. That’s why he thinks he’s dreaming again when he’s sucked into the land of Myrth.

In Myrth, the people live by prophecy. Seriously, it’s almost law that prophecies **MUST BE FULFILLED**, and the people do everything in their power to see it done. So when Greg Hart finds out he’s the fabled Greghart of prophecy, the Greghart destined to slay the dragon Ruuan and rescue the princess, he’s notably alarmed. But he’s forced into action, accompanied by a young man by the name of Lucky. (“Oh, and I’m Lucky,” the boy in orange added quickly. Greg stared at him dumbly. “Good for you.” “No, I mean my name is Lucky. Short for Luke.” “Actually, it’s longer,” Greg said.)

On their journey, they meet a variety of quirky characters: Melvin, spiteful little brother to the legendary dragon-slayer, Marvin; feisty Princess Pricilla, who insists on being called Sasha and sets out to slay the dragon herself; and Bart the Bard, who has an annoying habit of singing ballads of death and destruction just before Greg heads into danger. Together they’re attacked by a bollywomp, chased by falchions, and march to battle against a valley full of “razor teeth” —with Greg protesting all the way. Oddly enough, things do work out, just not at all in the way you’d expect it to.

My reaction? Sweet! (As in, I totally loved it!) This book has great characters and great action and adventure. I wasn’t quite as impressed with the settings. (I felt a little bit like I was walking around on a map.) But this is truly one of the funniest books I’ve ever read. Not just turn-up-the-corner-of-your-smile funny, but big-toothy-grin funny, and sometimes even crack-up-out-loud funny. It’s not the type of book you’d want to break open, say, in a crowd of strangers, or during a funeral, or when your teacher’s lecturing. But it’s great for most other times.

Here are a few more of my favorite quotes:

His name was Manny Malistino, only everyone called him Manny Malice, or better yet, Sir, if they thought

he might be listening.

Better a live coward than a dead hero, he'd (Greg) always believed.

"Get some sleep." Yes, of course. Wouldn't want to be tired when I'm killed by the witch.

"Now, would you prefer to be roasted, mauled, or eaten?" If ever there was a question that deserved to be rhetorical... "Are there any other choices?"

The action, humor and word plays will appeal to the middle school crowd, though there's absolutely nothing to prevent younger ones from reading. Language and content are perfectly clean. I'd highly recommend it for ages 10+.

Amy Lignor says

There are so many fantasy books out there in the market today, that it's very, very rare to get your hands on one that is so different from the rest - with so many fun characters and a truly exciting plot - that when it does happen, readers should flock to their bookstores. ...And Bill Allen has most definitely begun a series that is completely unique and absolutely "flock-inducing."

Greg Hart is the main character of this wonderful story. Greg is a young man who has to look forward to beginning junior high tomorrow, and he's not all that happy about it. In fact, there is a bully at Greg Hart's school who just loves making his life miserable. What Greg is very good at, however, is imagining. Carrying around a journal with him, Greg Hart puts together truly fantastical stories that take him into other worlds where he is the hero who saves the Princess and the Realm, and it's really exhausting imagining you're a hero all the time.

While he's writing in his journal, Greg hears the voice of the bully coming through the woods, walking with the girl he dreams about named Kristin. What Greg doesn't want to do is look like an idiot or be teased in front of the prettiest girl in school, so he takes off - running through the woods to get out of the bully's reach. What happens next is something Greg was never counting on.

Through a portal he goes, and Greg Hart ends up in the Kingdom of Myrth, headed by King Peter Pendegrass. He's a very amiable king, but he was waiting for a long time for the hero of the prophecy to arrive and he is so happy when Greg lands in his realm. A hysterical assistant to the King named Lucky takes Greg aside and tells him all about the prophecy that one day a hero by the name of Greghart will come and slay the mighty dragon, Ruuan. Of course, Greg knows that they've made a mistake and TRIES to tell them so but...no deal. Everyone in the realm believes wholeheartedly that Greg Hart is Greghart.

The quest for the dragon involves a mysterious amulet, a Wiccan woman by the name of Witch Hazel, monkey dogs, trees that move, and a family of dragon-slayers that Greg desperately wants on his side. Every part of this story is extremely satisfying. The dialogue is hysterical, and watching Greg Hart battle his way through the death-defying tasks is a plot worth reading!

A fantasy novel that FINALLY stands out from the pack! Bill Allen has done an incredible job of bringing the land of Myrth to life, leaving the reader truly excited about the next great adventure.

Tracey says

This is a young adult novel I was granted access to by Netgalley – my thanks.

It's a classic idea: a much-bullied 12-year-old boy is whisked off from his down-trodden life to another world, where he can become a hero. Greg Hart is just that boy – and Myrrth is just that other world. He abruptly finds himself in the middle of a ring of wizards who have gone searching for him through the worlds. Well – searching for the mighty Greghart, prophesied to slay the dragon who will take the princess. Greg protests futilely that he would have trouble slaying a dragonfly, much less a dragon ("He'd be lucky to win a fight against one of the smaller girls at school") – particularly when he realizes there's a bona fide dragonslayer called Greatheart – but no one listens: they are certain that the prophecy clearly points to him, and prophecies guide everyone's lives on Myrrth, and therefore a-slaking he will go.

It's a clever and fun twist on the idea. I had two problems with the writing: Greg was constantly "almost scream"ing or "nearly scream"ing or straight out screaming – and when it wasn't screaming it was shrieking. The other fingernails-on-a-blackboard thing was a misuse of language, an incorrect past tense used constantly. It's actually a sort of a spoiler to be more specific; the blunder is necessary. But really irritating.

If you find puns intolerable, this is not the book (or series) for you; from chapter headings on through puns abound. My favorites herein are the names of the dragons, Ruuan being the one Greg is expected to take out. It does wear a little thin after a while, but might be fun for its actual target audience.

I liked Greg (mostly) and the other characters (mostly – and especially Ruuan), and while I found it a little irritating that there were some mysteries left mysterious (who Nathan is, exactly, for example) it is understandable in light of plans for a series. It's a good foundation - and with one of my favorite covers of the year so far.

Amy Eye says

I love daydreaming about being something I thought I would or could never be: a rockstar, a famous actor, an astronaut, a circus performer, and a hero. We all have had that fantasy where we believe we know exactly how we would act if we were placed in a situation where our fantasies became reality. Greg Hart....poor, poor Greg Hart had no idea that he would not have to just fantasize about what he would do, but he would have to face the most challenging of all the popular fantasies.

Greg Hart is a small, well, better say scrawny middle school kid who is always being picked last, beat up, and ignored. He spends his free time writing about exciting adventures in which he defeats trolls and rescues fair maidens in distress. Not only is he not able escape a bully who invades his tree house, but he is also unable to escape a spell that transports Greg into the land of Myrrth.

Greg Hart soon learns that the people of Myrrth have been waiting in anticipation for his arrival. He is a great hero to these people, everyone knows of Greg and his wonderful deeds and all of the wondrous things Greg has accomplished. The only problem is, Greg has not done any of these things yet. He is given a king's treatment and fanfare befitting a glorious hero, but only because a prophecy stated at Greghart from Earth

would be slaying a dragon and saving the princess from a horrible fate.

Accompanied by Lucky, the luckiest person on Myrth, Greg is sent out on this mission that the entire already expects to be a success because the prophecy said so and prophecies are never wrong. Facing trolls, evil witches, 300 foot tall dragons should be a piece of cake right? With the prophecy on his side and the luckiest person alive, how could anything possibly go wrong? Well, add in the fact Greg doesn't believe in this prophecy any more than he can skin a monkeydog and prophecies don't seem quite as obtainable as one would think.

Oh yea, the prophecy was made by a man who appears to have lived longer than the mountains on Myrth and who can only be understood by his wife who is almost completely deaf.....one more thing, the scribe who copied the prophecy is a drunk with atrocious handwriting. I'm all for an adventure with me as the cookable hero...wouldn't you be??

How to Slay a Dragon has a ton of sarcasm in it, something I just happen to be very fond of. You do not go more than a couple of pages without Greg making some sort of remark or humor being thrown in at some point. The humor can be enjoyed by young and old(er) alike. There always seems to be a twist and turn thrown in there as well. The story line seemed to drag for me in several places and I had a hard time keeping from putting the book down and getting a few other things done before returning to the book. Many YA books have a story line that can be engrossing for younger audiences as well as adult readers. This book, I believe, was geared more towards younger readers only. The story is a cute one, but not complex enough to grip an older crowd.

The lessons that are taught in this book I believe are strong ones: never give up hope and only you are in charge of your own fate. Greg had an entire planet pushing him to be one thing and to go down a certain path. Greg knew that life and that path was not for him, and he went against the popular ideas and made his own way. Kudos to Greg for knowing who he was and being the best darn Greg he could be!

Kate Hale says

One of the best things on a quiet Friday night to yourself is the opportunity to cuddle with a good book. Last night, I made use of the new Kindle Lending Library to borrow How to Slay a Dragon by Bill Allen (Bell Bridge, 2011). Even though I can only borrow one book a month on my one month free trial of Amazon Prime (Surprise! That's how they get you!) I definitely plan on buying upcoming books in this series (again, they got me!).

I'm not sure why I've been drifting more to elevated middle-grade books these days, but I like what I read. Allen's book quickly transports readers into the tree house of seventh-grader Greg Hart – a short, gangly boy who spends his time writing fantastical adventures, constantly gets picked on by bullies like Manny Malice, and is invisible to all female cuteness. Just as he's about to be pounded on by his arch nemesis – WHOOSH! – Greg is teleported via magic to a fantasy land called Myrth that is like something out of his own journal of adventures. This book is full of a great deal of WHOOSHes. And it moves quick. All of a sudden, Greg finds out he's the famed Greghart from a mysterious prophecy that claims he's out to slay a dragon. There's just one problem – Greg Hart is actually two words and he's never slain a dragon before. With much pushing and prodding, Greg is coerced into his predicted journey and meets a molten lava path, shrieking shrubbery, witches, shadowcats, a bollywomp, spirelings, and yes, a 300-foot dragon.

It's a fast trip through Myrth, and there's hardly time to stop and check out the scenery, but Allen's imagination runs wild with the characters and the fun plot. Probably the best part is the wordplay. Greghart vs Greatheart, Earth vs Myrth, Simon Sez, and almost every chapter uses the word "Hart" (Hart of the Matter, Reunion of the Hart). There's lots of light sarcasm, which makes the book fun and keeps it moving quickly (WHOOSH!) and makes it the perfect choice for reluctant (and dorky mid-20s) readers.

Marthita says

When I first started reading this book I was kind of lost, if I must be honest... It starts like any other book, introducing the main character, Greg, writing in his journal all his "adventures" fighting against giants and trolls, but the truth is that Greg is just a normal and small (very small for his age) 12 year old boy that lives on Earth and his greatest ability is to out run the bullies... But then, he's transport to the world of Myrth and what kept me wondering for almost five chapters was the prophecy Greg must fulfill... Yeah, I know that all of this sounds easy, but the thing is that the whole prophecy is something that haven't happen yet; the princess is safe, and the dragon is away, but since Greg is the mighty hero who will rescue the yet un-kidnap princess from Ruann everyone in the kingdom is ok with a 12 year old risking his life because prophecies never get wrong... Weird, right?

As I said, in the beginning I found very difficult to keep up with the book, but after I learn to navigate the strange places of Myrth, I realized that this story was amazing and so full of magic; seeing who every decision that Greg does lead him to what the prophet announce and to a very different ending from what I was thinking... Seriously, I never saw that coming!

Some characters are kind of plain, but hopefully the will improve in the sequel and I'll get to know them better... If I have to choose who my favorite character was, that will be Lucky (: I just love the way he sees everything and even when he is in the worst of the situations manage to see the positive side and make me laugh with his comments.

The book is full of fantasy, laughs, and adventures and shows us the way Greg changes through the book and becomes a very brave boy.

Judy & Marianne from Long and Short Reviews says

Originally posted at: <http://aurorareviews.blogspot.com/201...>

Greg Hart has an active imagination for a boy. He's not particularly athletic or exceptionally smart. He writes in his journal and creates exciting fantasies where he's the "hero" in some imaginary adventure. He sure never expected to transport from his world to another and find himself ACTUALLY facing a death-defying adventure!

This author has created a very challenging course for his young character who keeps protesting he's no hero. He takes an ordinary school kid and plops him in another world where witches and dragons and strange creatures live. His assignment: To slay the dragon and save the princess. There's nowhere to run and if he hides in the wrong place; something might eat him.

Mr. Allen grabs your attention at the very first chapter and keeps Greg running all throughout the book. Young adults reading this will find it easy to stay connected to the characters and interested in what might turn up next in the woods. The author has a very creative writing style. Some creatures are merely odd, some will eat you, and some will kill you just for fun. It's good that Greg has some friends with him or he'd never make it through.

One aspect I really liked about this story is how the author takes a young man with no self-confidence to speak of on an adventure that helps him grow up and understand he has skills he had never identified as being important. The author also plays word games in the story. How Greg slays the dragon is amazing. This ending will surprise with its cleverness!

This is a very good adventure that younger readers can enjoy. You might want to use it as a read-aloud book because they may not recognize some of the "punny" jokes included. There is also some violence and danger included in the story which makes it exciting and could be discussed if the child has any questions.

This was Greg's first adventure and it appears he will be returning to Mryth. This series put me in mind of the Magic Tree House stories. Why not grab a copy of How to Slay a Dragon and then watch for the future books. Greg is an fantastic character you'll want to follow.

Jessica says

For Greg Hart, fantasies are a part of life. His journal is a place to share the person that he wishes he was. A hero. A strong, quick and brave character who slays vicious baddies with one hand tied behind his back (and of course always gets the girl in the end). Little does poor Greg know that he is destined to set off on a actual dangerous quest! In this story Greg really is the hero, and one false move will land him on the dragon's lunch menu.

I honestly loved Greg as a character, and I know that the reading group this book is aimed at will as well. He is funny, honest, and downright noble at times. Beneath the scrawny boy that everyone sees on the outside beats the heart of a hero. Greg has a quick wit that made me laugh out loud more than once. I adored how the author allowed his character to have doubts and fears. Greg isn't certain the prophecy is about him, and he's willing to (loudly) voice that to anyone who will listen. Still, he knows that a princess' life is at stake. Despite his fears, off he goes on an epic adventure.

Bill Allen weaves a story that will have you glued to your seat, with your eyes in the book, from page one. Trolls, dragons, witches, you name it and you'll probably find it in this fast moving story. The trials that Greg faces are too much fun! (Well maybe not for him, but definitely for the reader.) You get to follow him as he grows and changes, and by the time the end of the story comes it is almost heartbreaking. I know I'm definitely looking forward to more of Greg's adventures.

The last thing I want to mention, because it amused me so greatly, is the word play that is present in this book! How to Slay a Dragon is peppered with puns, jokes, and just plain silliness. I am not afraid to admit that I giggled. A lot. There are some parts of this story that are just so absurd that you have to! Fans of fantasy stories will love this. I'd absolutely recommend this to upper middle grade readers as well. They might not get all the puns, but I guarantee they'll fall in love with Greg.

Long story short? Get a copy. How to Slay a Dragon is a great addition to any adventure lover's shelf.

Maxine says

Twelve-year-old Greg Hart is a great hero, able to defeat any and all monsters and all-round bad guys while still making it home for dinner - at least in the stories he writes. In real life, he is the constant target of bullies, beaten up on a daily basis. One day, as he is running from one such bully, Greg finds himself pulled into a different world called Myrth where he discovers that, according to prophesy, he will slay a dragon and save the princess.

Greg tries to convince everyone the prophecy is wrong or, at least, he's not the one it's about, especially as there is already a hero in Myrth named Greatheart - surely, he has to be The Guy of which the prophecy speaks. Unfortunately, almost everyone thinks he's just being modest (so heroic) and unless he fulfills the prophecy, he may never get home.

How to Slay a dragon is a fun and funny book aimed at a YA audience. It's chock full of puns and word play that I suspect children will find irresistible. It is the perfect rainy day book - it's charm and humour will keep children glued to the page from beginning to end - and adults will get more than the occasional chuckle out of poor Greg's attempt to prove he's not the hero of prophecy until - well, maybe he is.
