

## The Toofenfang

By Marilyn Reeves

Four-year-old Donny Gibson would wake up every night and see shadows on the wall and start screaming, "Daddy, Daddy! There's a monster in my room!"

His father would come running in. He'd turn on the light and look in the closet and behind the door and under the bed and say, "Nope. No monsters in here tonight. I guess your screams must have scared them all away." Then he would lie beside his son until he fell back to sleep again. This went on night after night until one morning his father noticed an ad in the paper.

That evening when he returned home from work he handed Donny a package. Inside was a strange looking stuffed animal. "What is it, Daddy?"

"It's a Toofenfang."

"What's a Toofenfang?"

"Well, let's see what it says in this little book that came with it."

*"Once upon a time, long, long ago, a pretty housecat married an itty-bitty dragon, and a few months later the cat laid an egg and they were blessed with a child. But it was a very strange looking creature indeed. It was covered all over with fluffy green fur, had the face of a dragon and meowed like a cat. The father said, 'Eeeeu, what is it?' And the mother said, 'I don't know, but I guess we'll love it anyway.'*

*"They called it a Toofenfang. As the parents soon discovered, the only thing the Toofenfang liked to eat was monsters. Big monsters, little monsters – all kinds of monsters. But no matter how many monsters they fed it, when the Toofenfang achieved its full growth it was no bigger than its mother, the housecat. And the only place it could sleep was under its parents' bed.*

*"One day when the Toofenfang was playing out in the forest, along came a little boy named Peter. When Peter saw the Toofenfang he squealed with delight and picked it up and took it home with him.*

*"Now, Peter's bedroom happened to be filled with monsters that kept poor Peter awake at night, so the Toofenfang was happy to stay with him. Every night it would sleep under Peter's bed and when a monster came into the room, the Toofenfang would grab it with its claws and gobble it up. So the Toofenfang had plenty to eat and Peter was kept safe from the monsters."*

Then Mr. Gibson told his son, "Recently a famous toy manufacturer heard the story and decided to make a whole bunch of the Toofenfangs to protect all the little girls and boys from the monsters in their bedrooms. So now you have your very own the Toofenfang. Just keep it under your bed and it will gobble up all the monsters and keep you safe a night."

"Thank you, Daddy!" said little Donny Gibson. And from then on the boy slept soundly every night.

And so did his father, who kept a Toofenfang under his bed too.