

## Wanted: a Real Dragon

This story is about Jilly who wants a real, live dragon. She goes with her dad to Mr Pink's shop to see if he can help her!

'I want a dragon,' Jilly told him. 'I know you can't buy them, but I'm sure there are such things. I know it in my bones.'

'If you believe in dragons,' said Mr Pink, 'then of course there are such things – for you.'

He did not sound at all surprised. He behaved as if someone asked him for a dragon every day of the week.

'Was there any particular kind of dragon you had in mind?' he went on.

'Oh, yes, yes!' Jilly told him eagerly. 'I'd like one just like the one on the poster in my bedroom. One with bright green scales and a curly tail. He's puffing out fire, but he looks really tame. He's smiling, I'm sure he is.'

'Well, then, you shall have that very one,' Mr Pink told her.

'Really?' cried Jilly. 'You mean – you mean you can bring him to life?'

Mr Pink did not reply. He fetched a pair of stepladders and placed them against the shelves.



Then he climbed up, right to the very top.

'Let me see, let me see ...' she heard him mutter.

Jilly saw him take a small box from the very back of that mysterious top shelf. Then, very carefully, he came down again.

'What a lot of cobwebs!' he said. 'What a lot of dust! I don't get asked for real magic every day, you see.'

Jilly glanced quickly towards the window, to make sure her father was not peeping. Luckily he was still looking at the masks and tricks in the window.

Mr Pink took the large green handkerchief from his top pocket and carefully dusted the box. Jilly could see that it was very, very old. It was made of wood, and strange signs and letters were carved on it.

'And now,' he said to Jilly, 'it's time for secrets!'

*Dragon Ride, Helen Cresswell*

### Understanding the text

- 1 Who are the characters in the story?
- 2 Where does this part of the story take place?
- 3 What does Jilly want?
- 4 What poster does Jilly have in her bedroom?
- 5 What does Mr Pink get from the top shelf?

### Looking at language

- 6 What does Jilly mean when she says 'I know it in my bones'?
- 7 What adjectives does the writer use to describe:

**a** the top shelf?      **b** the handkerchief?

- 8 Explain the meaning of these words as they are used in the story. Use a dictionary to help you.

**a** behaved      **b** scales      **c** tame      **d** glanced

### Exploring building suspense

- 9 How do you know that Mr Pink doesn't get things from the top shelf very often?
- 10 How do you think Jilly felt as Mr Pink got the ladder, climbed it and muttered 'Let me see...?'
- 11 How does the description of the box make you feel?
- 12 What secrets do you think Mr Pink will tell Jilly?



### Taking it further

- 13 If you got to this part of the story would you read on? Why? Why not?
- 14 Do you think Jilly will get the dragon? Why? Why not?

▶ RB, Unit 10, Extension

## Meeting the Dragon

Jilly takes the box home from Mr Pink's shop. That night, when her mother has kissed her goodnight and left the room, Jilly gets out of bed.

She lifted the pillow and took out the tiny green package. She carried it over to the table. Then she went to take down her dragon poster. Her fingers were trembling. She carried the poster over to the table and stared down at it.

She had lain in bed and gazed at it so many times before that she knew every tiny detail. If she closed her eyes, she could still see it. What was it Mr Pink had said?

'First, you must name him.'

Jilly had thought about this all day. She touched the painted dragon lightly on the head. 'I name you Lancelot!' she told him. He did not stir. He was still fixed and painted on the paper. She was pleased with the name. She thought it sounded good and dragon-like. You couldn't give a dragon an ordinary name like John or Mark or Keith.



Now came the most important moment of all. She opened the tiny parcel and stared at the pale green powder. Then, very carefully, she repeated to herself the words Mr Pink had told her to say. 'I take you, Lancelot, to be my dream,' she whispered. 'We will go invisible, like the wind!'

She waited, breath held, eyes still tight shut. Could it be, could it possibly be that, at this very moment, a real dragon was unfurling real wings from the flat prison of the poster? She thought she felt a stir of the air, a faint breath against her cheek. Half eager and half afraid she opened her eyes. 'Oh!' she gasped. There was the dragon she had longed for and dreamed of.

*Dragon Ride*, Helen Cresswell



### Understanding the text

- 1 What two things did Jilly put on the table?
- 2 What was the first thing that Jilly had to do?
- 3 What was in the tiny parcel?
- 4 What did Jilly feel against her cheek?
- 5 What was happening?

### Looking at language

- 6 If Lancelot goes 'like the wind' how will he travel?
- 7 Explain the meaning of these words as they are used in the story. Use a dictionary to help you.

**a** trembling    **b** detail    **c** stir    **d** eager

- 8 Find the opposite of these words in the story.

**a** extraordinary    **b** visible    **c** furling

### Exploring building suspense

- 9 How do you know Jilly was excited?
- 10 Make a list of things she had to do before the dragon came to life.
- 11 Why do you think Mr Pink told her to say, 'I take you ... to be my dream'?
- 12 Jilly is 'half afraid'. What do you think she is afraid of?
- 13 Why do you think the writer didn't just write: 'Jilly did what Mr Pink told her and the dragon appeared'?

### Taking it further

- 14 Imagine you could talk to Jilly about her dragon. What questions would you ask her?

▶ **RB, Unit 10, Extension**

## Flying With a Dragon

*Jilly's dream has come true! In her room is a real, live dragon and they are about to have an amazing adventure. The dragon tells Jilly to climb on his back.*

And then they were off! She felt the strong upward beat of his wings as he soared through the window and into the open air.

She looked down and saw the garden below. She saw the roses, the apple trees and her father digging. She gave a gasp. What if he looked up and saw her?

'We are invisible, remember,' came Lancelot's voice. It was as if he had read her thoughts.

'So we are!' She felt suddenly free! 'Hurray! We can go where we like, and no one will see us. Puff some fire! Please puff some fire!'

Lancelot obeyed. It was just as she had dreamed it would be. Flames went forking out on all sides. They danced and curled like scarlet snakes.

'Hurray!' Jilly yelled again.

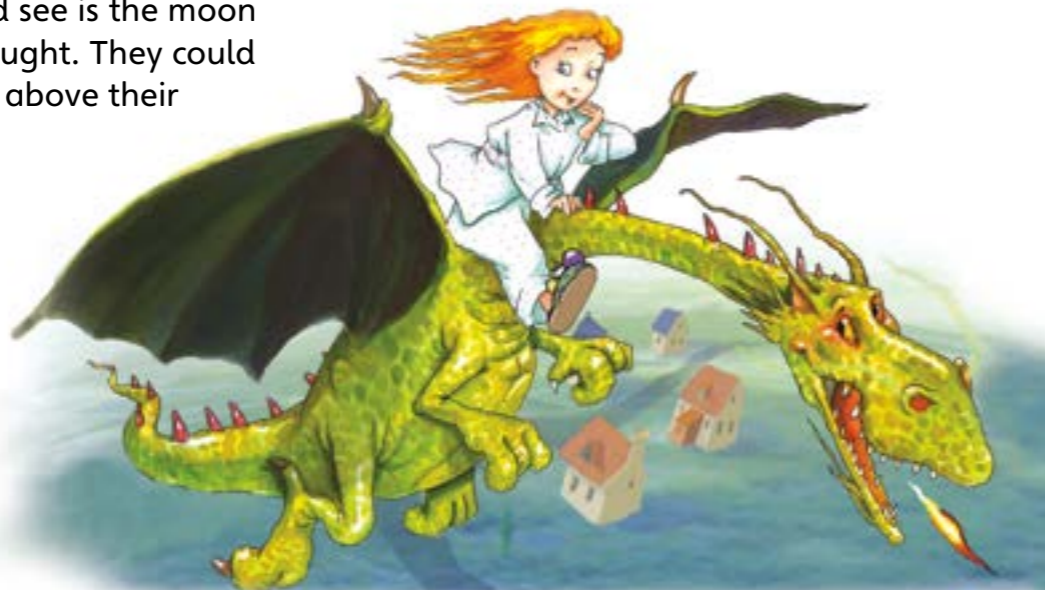
'What about some green smoke?' he called.

'Oh yes, please! Puff some green smoke. Puff lots of it!'

And so he did. Now the scarlet snakes were dancing in a green mist.

As the dragon rose higher and higher, Jilly could see tiny people walking below. They looked like toys. 'If they looked up, all they'd see is the moon coming up,' Jilly thought. They could not guess that right above their very heads was a dragon flying.

*Dragon Ride,*  
Helen Cresswell



### Understanding the text

- 1 How did Jilly and the dragon get out of her bedroom?
- 2 Who was in the garden?
- 3 What did Jilly ask Lancelot to do?
- 4 What else did Lancelot do?
- 5 If people looked up, what would they see?

### Looking at language

- 6 The writer says they 'soared' through the window. How do you think they were travelling?
- 7 How does the writer describe the flames that came from Lancelot's mouth? Do you think this is a good description? Why? Why not?
- 8 Explain the meaning of these words as they are used in the story. Use a dictionary to help you.

**a** gasp    **b** obeyed    **c** forking

### Exploring the adventure

- 9 Why couldn't anyone see Jilly and Lancelot?
- 10 How do you know Jilly was enjoying herself?
- 11 How does the writer describe the people walking below?
- 12 How do you know that Jilly had thought about a dragon ride before?

### Taking it further

▶ **RB, Unit 10, Extension**

- 13 Where do you think Jilly might ask the dragon to take her?
- 14 Imagine you could go for a dragon ride. Write about where you would ask the dragon to take you and why.