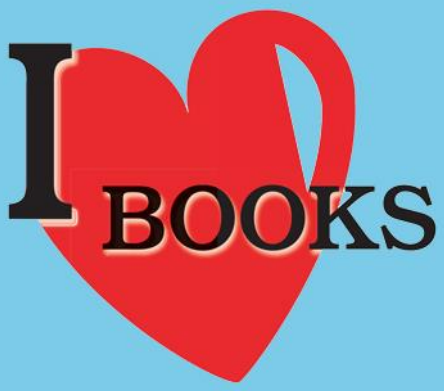


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Opening extract from

There's a Dragon in My Dinner

Written by

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Published by

Stripes Publishing an imprint of Little Tiger Press Group

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For Kaye and Eilidh – T.N.

In memory of my wonderful mum, Diana Horne, the funniest person I ever knew – S.H.

STRIPES PUBLISHING
An imprint of Little Tiger Press
1 The Coda Centre, 189 Munster Road,
London SW6 6AW

A paperback original
First published in Great Britain in 2016

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Illustrations copyright © Sarah Horne, 2016
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ISBN: 978-1-84715-671-6

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

Printed and bound in the UK.

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CHAPTER 2

BOY MEETS DRAGON

Quiz:

There's a dragon sitting on your bed, reading your comics. Do you:

a) Let him finish reading

b) Politely introduce yourself

c) Ignore him and hope he goes away

d) Poke him with a rolled-up comic

"Ouch! What did you do that for?"

I went with option D.

"Sorry," I said. "Are you … real?"

"Of course I'm real," said the creature, with a look of mild irritation. "So stop poking me."

"But you … you're a…" I couldn't believe what I was about to say. "You're a dragon." Even as the words left my mouth I couldn't grasp what was happening. I was definitely never eating beansprouts again.

"No, I'm not," he replied, which caught me off guard. I mean, sure, I had got it wrong about him being a toy, but I was pretty sure I was spot on about this.

"What do you mean, you're not?" I said. "You obviously are. I mean … look at you!"

"Dragons are about twelve metres long," he said. "Some of them can be twice that, in fact. Do I look that big to you?"

He definitely didn't. He was no longer

than a ruler. The kind of ruler that fits in your pencil case.

"So, what are you, then?" I asked.

"I'm a Mini-Dragon," he said, puffing out his chest and looking very pleased with himself.

"But … you *are* a dragon?" I said. "Just a really small one."

"Oh no," he said, shaking his little head. "Small dragons are much bigger. I'm a *Mini*-Dragon. Basically it goes: Large Dragon, Regular Dragon, Small Dragon, Komodo Dragon, Little Dragon, Tiny Dragon, Snap Dragon, Mini-Dragon.

"Mini-Dragons might be the littlest of the dragons," he continued. "But we're also the best."

"In what way?" I asked.

"Well, we can do everything that the others can do, apart from Snap Dragons,

and most dragons are starting to think they aren't real dragons anyway. Plus we can talk. Don't know if you noticed?"

"Now that you mention it…"

"And unlike other dragons, there's hardly any chance of us accidentally squashing you."

"Hardly?" I asked.

"Well, there *was* this one time with an uncle of mine who was very overweight," said the Mini-Dragon. "But my family doesn't like to talk about that…"

"So you can fly?" I asked.

"Piece of cake," he said. "Watch, I'll show you."

I looked around my room. "In here? I don't think that's a good idea."

"Don't worry, I know what I'm doing," he said, before sprinting towards the end of my bed, jumping off and… Well, it all got a bit complicated after that.

It wasn't exactly flying. But it wasn't exactly not-flying, either. It reminded me of skimming stones at the beach – though a lot less graceful. The Mini-Dragon crashed into the wall



and then

my wardrobe

and then my desk



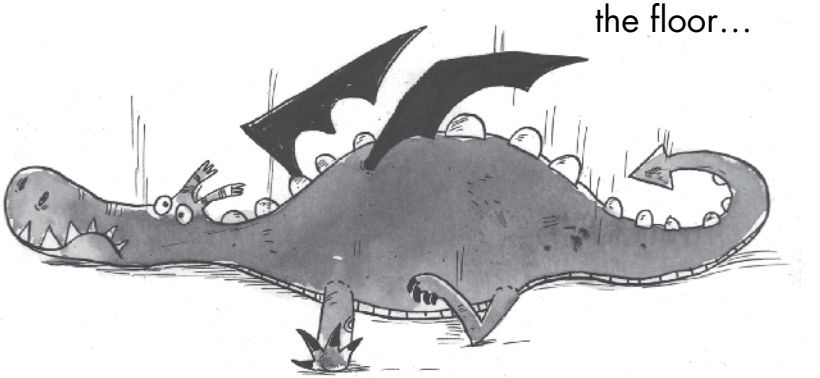
and then my window

and then my bed again
and then a shelf



and then the ceiling
and then my chest of drawers
and then another wall
and then two more shelves
and then me

and then finally
the floor…



It was certainly flying-*esque* but really it was more a kind of delayed falling.

"Guess I'm a bit rusty…" he said, dusting himself off and looking flustered.

I stared around the remains of my room. Clothes and comics were scattered everywhere. Books and toys that had been neatly arranged on shelves now lay all over the floor.

"Have you ever actually flown before?" I asked suspiciously.

The Mini-Dragon stroked his chin. "That depends on what you mean by 'before'…"

"Like … ever?"

"Oh. No. But I think I'm close to getting the hang of it… Hey, what's that banging noise?"

That banging noise was the sound of Mum stomping her way up the stairs.

"Quick, hide," I said, opening my sock drawer and chucking him in.