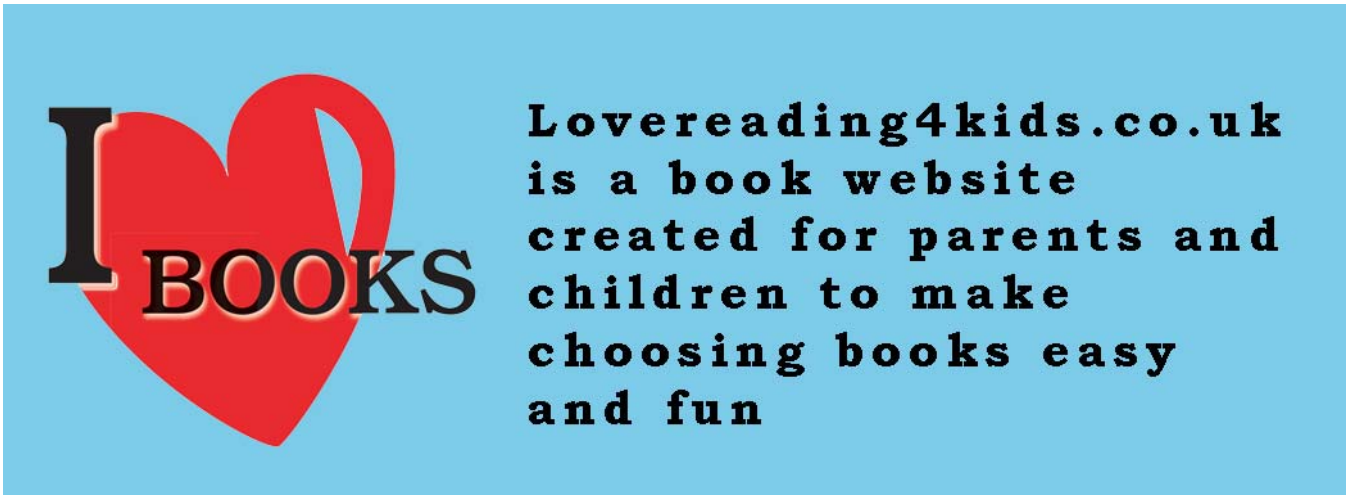


Opening extract from

There's a Dragon in My Backpack!

Written by

Tom Nicoll

Illustrated by

Sarah Horne

Published by

Little Tiger Press

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Lovereading4kids.co.uk

For my gran, missed every day,
and my grandad, who I blame for
making me a reader – T.N.

For Pops – 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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ISBN: 978-1-84715-676-1

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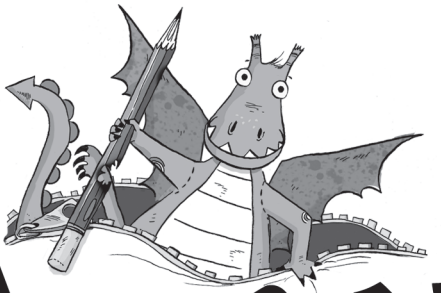
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from the British Library.

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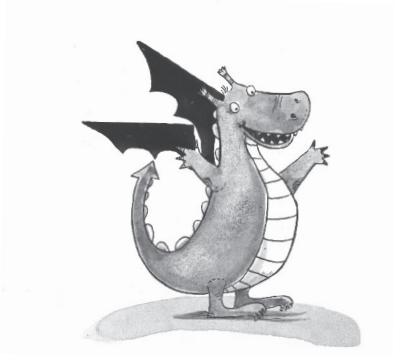
THERE'S A DRAGON IN MY BACKPACK!

TOM NICOLL

ILLUSTRATED BY SARAH HORNE

Stripes





CHAPTER 1
BRING YOUR DRAGON TO SCHOOL DAY

There's a dragon in my backpack. This is what I've been reminding myself of all day.

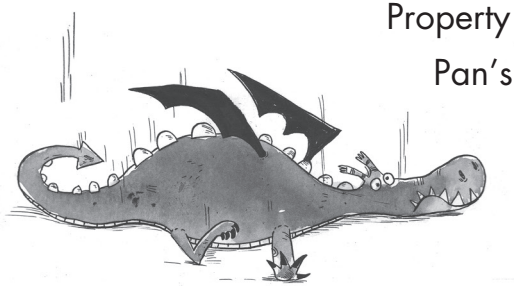
Q. Why is there a dragon in my backpack?

A. Because I'm too nice, that's why! And because the dragon's right, it's not fair that he has to stay in my bedroom all day.

Q. Why is there a dragon living in my bedroom?

A. Oh yeah, sorry, I should explain...

The dragon isn't one of those full-sized, princess-stealing, knight-guzzling dragons that you've probably heard of. For one thing, I'd never fit one of those in my bag. No, he's a Mini-Dragon. Which means he looks exactly like one of those other dragons – same green scaly skin, fiery breath, sharp teeth and claws – except that he's about fifteen centimetres tall and can talk. Oh, can he talk! His name is Pan and here's how he came into my life:



Property developers destroy
Pan's home in China.

Pan's parents bundle him in a crate
of beansprouts bound for Mexico
to stay with his aunt and uncle.

The restaurant in Mexico that ordered
the beansprouts closes down.
The crate is sent to England, to my friend
Min's parents' Chinese restaurant.



Min delivers Pan to my
house in a takeaway
meal without realizing.



I end up with a Mini-Dragon
who gives me no end of grief.



So now Pan spends most of his day in my house playing video games, reading comics and watching TV. Which sounds like a perfect day to me, but for some reason he finds it boring. For ages he's been begging me to let him come to school and last night I finally gave in, on the condition that he keep quiet and stay out of sight in my bag.



Surprisingly, today's actually been going well. Aside from the odd whisper from Pan, asking me to repeat something he's missed or helpfully providing me with the answer to a sum or ten, he's kept his word. And it's almost home time now so I can probably stop worrying. I mean, realistically, there's almost no chance at all of something going wrong now.

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAAT!"



Almost no chance.

That screaming woman who looks a bit like a yeti is Miss Biggs, my teacher. She thinks she's just seen a rat run across the classroom floor.

She hasn't.

She's just seen a Mini-Dragon run across the classroom floor.

Although completely different, I can see why she might confuse the two. If you had just caught sight of a tiny creature darting across the room, you'd probably think rat before you thought Mini-Dragon. To be honest, you'd probably never think Mini-Dragon.

Unless you happen to be me. In which case you'd *always* think Mini-Dragon.

As screaming kids began to barge their way to the door, I noticed Miss Biggs reaching under her desk and pulling out the cricket bat everyone knows she keeps there. No one quite knows what it's for, although there have been plenty of gruesome stories passed down over the years about Miss Biggs using it on