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Opening extract from
The Dragonsitter's Castle

Written by
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From: Edward Smith-Pickle

To: Morton Pickle

Date: Monday 26 December

Subject: Look who's here



Attachments: Unexpected guests



Dear Uncle Morton

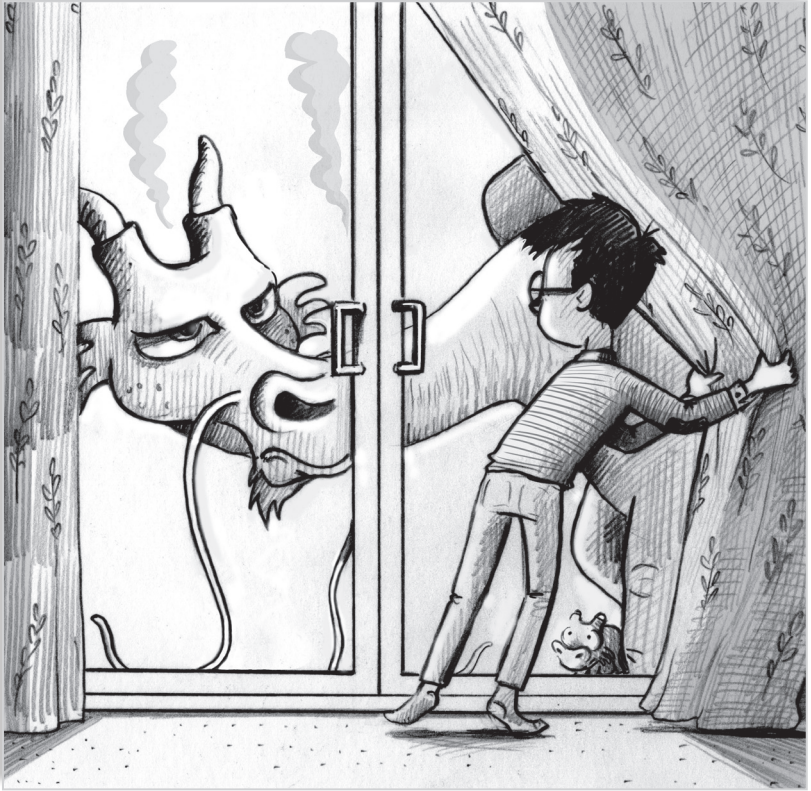
I just tried calling you, but the phone made a funny noise. Have you changed your number?

I wanted to tell you your dragons are here.

They must have arrived in the middle of the night. When I came down for breakfast, Ziggy was sitting on the patio, peering through the window, looking very sorry for herself.

I didn't even see baby Arthur. I thought Ziggy had left him at home. Then I realised he was tucked under her tummy, trying to keep warm.

They're feeling better now we've given them some toast and let them sit by the radiator.



Have they come to say Happy Christmas?
Are you coming too? I'm afraid we haven't
got you a present, but there's lots of turkey
left and about a million brussels sprouts.

Love from

Eddie

From: Edward Smith-Pickle
To: Morton Pickle
Date: Tuesday 27 December
Subject: Collection



Dear Uncle Morton

Your dragons are still here. They have eaten the entire contents of the fridge and most of the tins in the cupboard too.

Arthur also swallowed three spoons and the remote control.

Mum says they will probably come out the other end, but I'm not really looking forward to that.

She wants to know when you are coming to collect the dragons.

We're leaving first thing on Thursday morning, so she says could you get here by Wednesday afternoon at the latest?

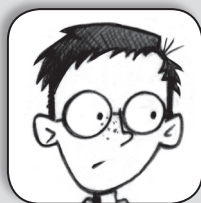
Eddie

From: Edward Smith-Pickle

To: Morton Pickle

Date: Wednesday 28 December

Subject: Please call us!



Dear Uncle Morton

Your phone is still making the same noise. Mum says you've probably been cut off because you haven't paid your bill.

Does that mean you haven't got my emails either?

So what are we supposed to do with the dragons?

We're leaving first thing tomorrow morning.

Mum has to catch the 9.03 or she won't arrive in time for the meet-and-greet with Swami Ticklemore.

She is going on that yoga retreat like you suggested. She says she deserves it after the year she's had.

I asked if the dragons could stay here without us, but she said no way, José, which you have to admit is fair enough after last time.

Emily and I are going to stay with Dad in his new house. He says it's a castle, but Dad's always saying things like that.

I rang him and asked if we could bring the dragons.

He said no, because his new girlfriend Bronwen is allergic to fur.

I told him dragons don't have fur, but he said even so.

So please come and get them ASAP.

Eddie

PS I've been waiting with my rubber gloves, but there's still no sign of those spoons or the remote control.

From: Edward Smith-Pickle

To: Morton Pickle

Date: Thursday 29 December

Subject: Where are you????



Dear Uncle Morton

Mum says if you're not here in the next ten minutes, she'll leave the dragons in the street and they can take care of themselves.

I said you couldn't possibly get from Scotland to here in ten minutes, and she said worse things happen at sea.

I have literally no idea what she meant.

Now she and Dad are shouting at one another just like they used to when they were still married.

If you get this in the next ten minutes, please call us!

Eddie