

The Dragon Machine

Written by Helen Ward

George noticed his first dragon on a wet Thursday. The more he looked the more dragons he saw! Unseen, ignored and overlooked the dragons went unnoticed...just like George.

Dragons perched on the telephone wires, they sat amongst the dustbins. They chased butterflies through the tulips. They played havoc with the cat. They sank the water lilies in the pond. George fed them delicious stale biscuits and smelly cheese. And then the trouble began.

The dragons followed George everywhere. George spent more and more of his time cleaning up muddy footprints, tidying untidiness and saying sorry for breaking things the he had not broken. George's dragons were becoming too troublesome to stay unnoticed for much longer. Something had to be done. George went in search of some advice.

The dragons followed George to the library. He consulted the Encyclopedia of Dragons. There were dire warnings: never feed a dragon; never let a dragon into your home... too late. There were tragic tales of dragons discovered and captured... too sad. And there was a map of the place where dragons belonged. A great wilderness unnoticed and overlooked and safe. But George would have to show them the way.

George drew plans for a machine. The machine had a beginning, a middle, and a tail end...an undercarriage, and beautiful wings. George hammered in the last nail. He packed delicious stale biscuits and smelly cheese and himself into the dragon machine.

The machine lumbered, engine ticking gently, into the night sky. And the dragons followed. The machine clicked and whirred over the sleeping town. It rattled and clunked over the moonlit fields and woods. The dragons followed. It clattered and banged and crashed into the great wilderness. The dragons followed. George was so tired he went to sleep in the wreckage of his dragon machine.

By morning, all the dragons were gone. There was an emptiness all around and inside George. And an emptiness at home where George should have been.

They searched the town. They searched the fields. They ventured into the great wilderness looking for George and found him among the broken pieces of his dragon machine. George and his dreams of dragon went home.

Everyone was pleased to see George, and George was pleased to be back. He no longer went unseen, ignored and overlooked. They made him a huge cake to celebrate his return and gave him a dog as a present.

Nobody else noticed that it wasn't a **dog**.