

How to Train Your Dragon - Cressida Cowell

Lesson 2

A Note from Hiccup

Read the extract below which begins the story and think about:

- Why this was included at the start.
- What it tells us about the character.
- What tone it sets for the book.

There were dragons when I was a boy.

There were great, grim, sky dragons that nested on the cliff tops like gigantic scary birds. Little, brown, scuttly dragons that hunted down the mice and rats in well-organised packs. Preposterously huge Sea Dragons that were twenty times as big as the Big Blue Whale and who killed for the fun of it.

You will have to take my word for it, for the dragons are disappearing so fast they may soon become extinct.

Nobody knows what is happening. They are crawling back into the sea from whence they came, leaving not a bone, not a fang, in the earth for the men of the future to remember them by.

So, in order that these amazing creatures should not be forgotten, I will tell this true story from my childhood.

I was not the sort of boy who could train a dragon with the mere lifting of an eyebrow. I was not a natural at the Heroism business. I had to work at it.

This is the story of becoming a Hero the Hard Way.

Comprehension

Chapter 11: Thor is Angry

The storm raged through the whole of that night. Hiccup lay unable to sleep as the wind hurled about the walls like fifty dragons trying to get in.

'Let us in, let us in,' shrieked the wind. 'We're very, very hungry.'

Out in the blackness and way out to sea the storm was so wild and the waves so gigantic that they disturbed the sleep of a couple of very ancient Sea Dragons indeed.

The first dragon was averagely enormous, about the size of a largish cliff.

The second dragon was that Monster mentioned earlier in this story, the great beast who had been sleeping off his Roman picnic for the past six centuries or so, the one who had recently been drifting into lighter sleep.

The great storm lifted both dragons gently from the seabed like a couple of sleeping babies, and washed them on the swell of one indescribably enormous wave on to The Long Beach, outside Hiccup's village.

And there they stayed, sleeping peacefully, while the wind shrieked horribly all around them like wild Viking ghosts having a loud party in Valhalla, until the storm blew itself out and the sun came up on a beach full of dragon and very little else.

Questions

1. *How big was the first dragon?*
2. *How long had the second dragon been sleeping?*
3. *How do both dragons end up on the Long Beach, near Hiccup's village?*
4. *Give two examples of how Cowell makes the storm seem very powerful.*
5. *This part is all about building tension. How does Cowell make the reader want to find out what happens next?*

Vocabulary

1. Amatuer
2. Characteristic
3. Valhalla
4. Initiation
5. Intervene
6. Heir
7. Monstrous
8. Fate
9. Warrior
10. Transformation
11. Ordinary
12. Appreciative
13. Entire
14. Method
15. Proving
16. Gratitude
17. Indignant
18. Controversial
19. Flexed
20. Muttering

HOMEWORK

Using the work we did today as inspiration, **write your own 'note from a hero'**.

OR

Write a **short story** using **at least 5 new words** (above) that we learned from these chapters.