

# Do Not Drop

by Margaret Teall  
Art by Patrice Barton

I found it in the basement—a book with a cover so clear you could almost see through it. These were the only words inside: *Do not drop this book!*

What happens if you drop it? I wondered. I just had to know. So that night when I was alone in my room, I held the book high above my head and let go.

It slammed on the floor.  
It trembled. It wriggled.  
And then . . . a mossy green lizard the size of a small dog squeezed out! I was about to scream for Mom and Dad when smoke started curling from her nose.

She was a dragon.  
“Hello,” I whispered, my voice trembling. “I’m Yuka.  
Who are you?”





The dragon just looked at me through golden eyes  
and wagged her glimmering tail.

“You’re a cutie, aren’t you?” I slid my hand up and down my dragon’s back. “I’ve always wanted a pet!”

I looked at the book again. Now it said: *Dragons do not make good pets. Drop book again to send it back.*

“Don’t worry, dragon,” I cooed. “I’m going to keep you forever!”

That's when my dragon started sniffing the floor and whining. She was ready to eat!

"Let's see," I said, stroking her belly. "What sorts of stuff do you eat?"

My dragon clomped a scaly paw on the clear, blue book and wagged her snakelike tail. I opened the book and saw a picture of a dragon eating a bird.

"How about chicken?" I asked my dragon. She wiggled excitedly. I dashed downstairs and grabbed some chicken from the refrigerator. My dragon devoured it, then curled up and fell asleep.



Later that night, I lay in bed, smiling as I thought about my little dragon. “I can’t believe I used to want a cat,” I mumbled happily. “But I wonder where I’ll find more chicken tomorrow.”

That’s when I heard the clawing—then banging, hissing, and grunting. Sitting up in bed, I whispered, “What’s the matter, dragon?”

As soon as she saw me, my baby dragon—now as big as a bear—leapt across the room. She licked my face with her slimy tongue.

“You are so big!” I said, wiping gooey dragon slobber off my cheek.



She wagged her tail happily and jumped onto the bed.

Sighing, I scrunched over to make room for my enormous dragon. “Now you keep quiet!” I told her.

My dragon began to snore. That’s when I smelled smoke. Flames were shooting out of my dragon’s nose. She was breathing fire!



“Dragon!” I shouted, leaping to my feet. “You’re going to burn down the house!”

My dragon sat up and wagged her tail.  
Tears stinging my eyes, I reached up to pet my  
dragon. She licked my hand with a huge, burning-hot  
tongue.

“Good-bye, my dear dragon,” I whispered,  
dropping the book. She disappeared in a puff of  
smoke.



I gently set the book on my shelf. Tomorrow I'd  
return it to the basement and ask my mom for a cat.