

The Sick Young Dragon



Here is a poem about a young dragon who is sick. He is unable to blow fire as he usually does. Will the dragon get his fire back? Let's read the poem to find out.

'What can I do?' the young dragon cried.
'Although I've simply tried and tried.
It doesn't matter how hard I blow,
I cannot get my fire to go!'

'Open your mouth,' his mother said.
'It's **no wonder**! Your throat's red.
Your **scales** are cold. You must be ill.
I think you must have caught a **chill**.'

The doctor came. He looked and said,
'You'll need a day or two in bed.
Your **temperature**'s down. No doubt
That's the reason your fire has gone out.'

'Just drink this petrol. Chew these nails.
They'll help you to warm up your scales.
Just take it easy. Watch TV,
You'll soon be **as right as rain**, you'll see.'

The young dragon did as he was told.
And soon his scales stopped feeling cold.
He sneezed some sparks. His face glowed bright.
He coughed and set the sheets **alight**.



no wonder: used to say that something is not surprising
of fish and some animals

chill: a cold

temperature: the measurement of how hot somebody's body is

as right as rain: perfectly all right

alight: on fire, burning

'Oh dear!' he cried. 'I have burnt the bed!'
 'It doesn't matter,' his mother said.
 'Those sheets were old. Go out and play.
 Just watch where you breathe fire today!'



John Foster (born 1941) is a British poet who has written many poems and compiled numerous anthologies of children's poetry. He is also an educationist who taught in schools in Oxfordshire. He worked on textbooks before he became a children's poet.

Make connections

Answer the following questions based on the poem.

In this section, we will:

- understand the details of the poem.
- learn how to analyse a poem. (C-2.1, 2.2)

1. Choose the right answer.

a. '*Although I've simply tried and tried*' means

- the dragon tried doing simple things.
- he tried very hard, over and over again.
- he tried hard, just once.

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b. '*I cannot get my fire to go!*' shows that the dragon

- wanted his fire to start, but he could not do it.
- wanted his fire to go away, but he could not do it.
- wanted his mother to get him some fire but she would not get it.

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c. '*No doubt*

That's the reason your fire has gone out.' – tells us that the doctor

- did not know the reason why the fire had gone out.
- did not want to tell anyone the reason why the fire had gone out.
- was very sure of the reason why the fire had gone out.

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d. *'Just watch where you breathe fire today!'* means

- i. do not breathe fire today.
- ii. sit and watch yourself breathe fire today.
- iii. be careful where you breathe fire today.



2. Read these lines and answer the questions that follow.

a. *'Open your mouth,' his mother said.*

'It's no wonder! Your throat's red.

Your scales are cold. You must be ill.

I think you must have caught a chill.'

- i. Why did the dragon's mother ask him to open his mouth?
- ii. What are the two symptoms of illness that the mother noticed in the young dragon?
- iii. What did the dragon's mother do next?

b. *The young dragon did as he was told.*

And soon his scales stopped feeling cold.

He sneezed some sparks. His face glowed bright.

He coughed and set the sheets alight.

- i. Who told the young dragon what to do?
- ii. What did the young dragon have to do?
- iii. Which signs showed that he had begun to feel better?

A symptom is a sign that shows that someone is not well.

3. This is a humorous poem—one that we find funny. What do you think makes this poem funny?

4. The young dragon fell ill and he could not blow fire any more. His mother thought he must have caught a cold. Can you guess how he might have caught a cold?

Appreciation

Rhyming words

In this section, we will:

- learn about rhyming words.
(C-2.1, 2.2)

1. Find two words from the poem that rhyme with each of the words given below.

a. fried: _____

b. row: _____

c. bill: _____

d. drought: _____

e. whales: _____

f. bold: _____

2. Read the poem given below and fill in the blanks with words from the box.
Then illustrate the poem.

elephant

telephone

song

free

trunk

Elelephony

Once there was an _____ ,
Who tried to use the telephant—
No! No! I mean an elephone
Who tried to use the _____ —
(Dear me! I am not certain quite
That even now I've got it right.)
Howe'er it was, he got his _____
Entangled in the telephunk;
The more he tried to get it _____ ,
The louder buzzed the telephee—
(I fear I'd better drop the _____
Of elephop and telephong!)

Laura Elizabeth Richards