

The Dragon's Egg

Once there was a man and a dragon who had made friends, and lived together like brothers, trusting each other in everything. The dragon had gathered together a huge treasure of silver and gold, and the time came when he had to go on a journey, and left the man to guard his treasure.



Now this dragon was a wise creature, and he knew what the desire for gold does even to the best of men. He was not sure whether he could quite trust his friend, so he decided to test him.

He brought out an egg in a gold casket and said to the man, "While I'm away I know that you will guard my treasure faithfully, and so I'm going to tell you a secret. All my treasure is worth nothing compared with this egg. For on this egg depends my very life. If the egg is broken, I shall die immediately. Therefore guard it with your life, if you love me."

"I will indeed die before any harm shall come to you, beloved friend," said the man.

So the dragon shut the casket, put it carefully with the rest of his treasure, and went away into a distant country.

After a while the temptation to possess so much gold and silver grew stronger and stronger, until the man could resist it no more.

"Dragons do not know what to do with treasure," he said to himself. "They just collect it and guard it like misers. Now I would be able to spend it properly... All I have to do is to break the magic egg, the dragon will die immediately – and the treasure will be mine."

So the man broke the egg, and took possession of the treasure.



But in fact the dragon had not gone very far away. Suddenly he returned, found that the man had broken the egg – and realised just how trustworthy his friend really was.

And it seems more than likely that the dragon ate the man for his supper that very night.

R L Green

Do you remember?

Copy these sentences. Choose a word from the box to fill each gap.

trust man gold dragon journey treasure silver

1. A _____ and a _____ were friends.
2. The dragon collected _____ and _____.
3. The dragon had to go away on a long _____.
4. The dragon didn't _____ the man.
5. The man tried to steal the dragon's _____.



More to think about

1. Read these sentences about the story. Copy them in the right order.

He ate the man for supper.

The dragon had a lot of treasure.

The dragon came back and was very upset.

He asked the man to look after his gold and silver.

The man tried to kill the dragon and keep the treasure.

2. Write a sentence to answer each question.
 - a) Why did the dragon think he could trust the man at first?
 - b) Why did he change his mind about trusting the man?
 - c) Did the man always intend to steal the treasure?
 - d) Why didn't the dragon die when the man broke the egg?

Now try these

1. Find words in the passage that mean:
 - a) collected b) very big c) wish or want d) a small box.
2. Write ...
 - a) three things you might do if you had a dragon as a friend.
 - b) three things you might do if you suddenly became very rich.