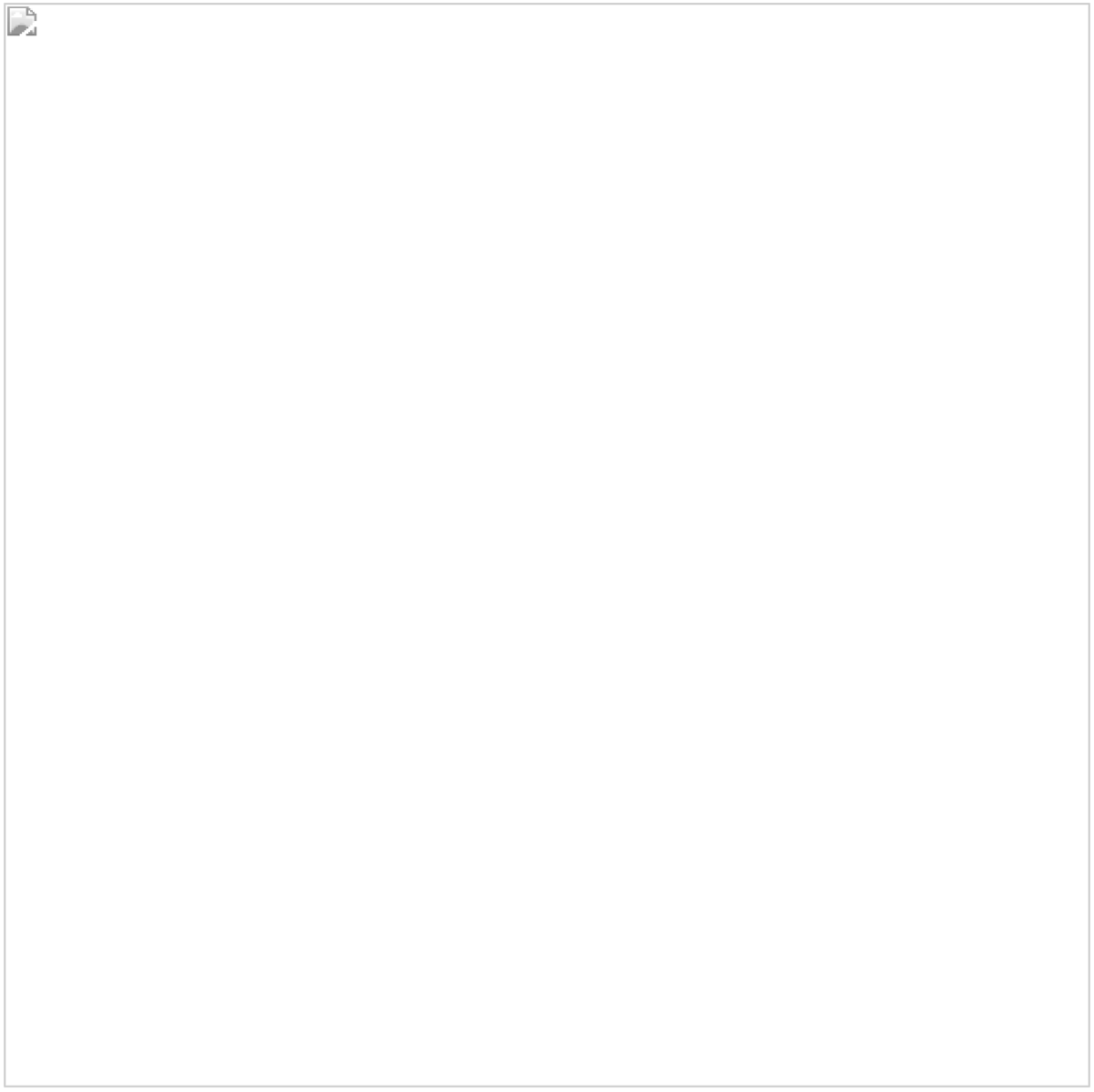
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Reluctant Dragon

A Boy, a Poetry-Loving Dragon, and St. George



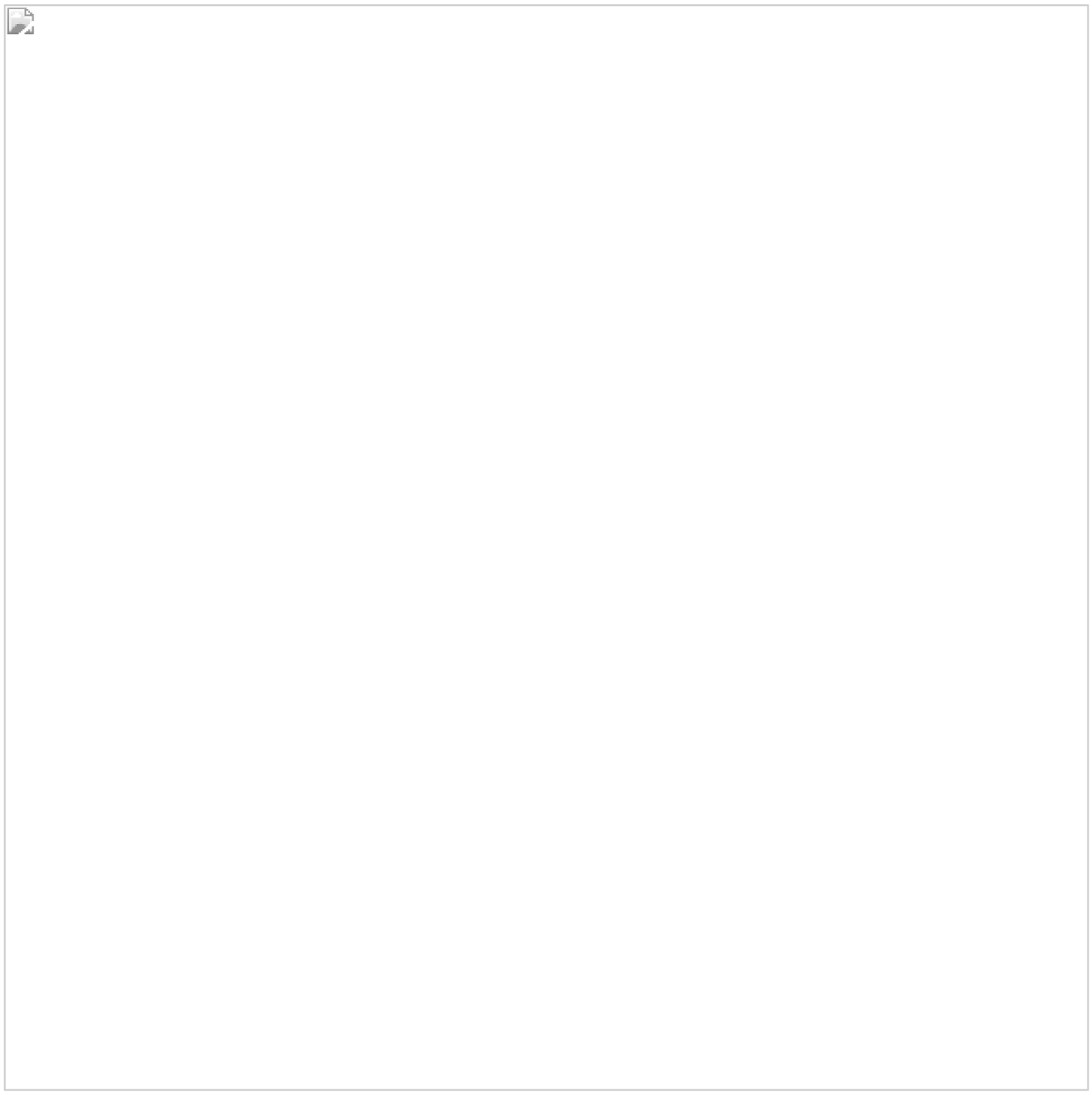
By Kenneth Grahame

TALK ABOUT IT

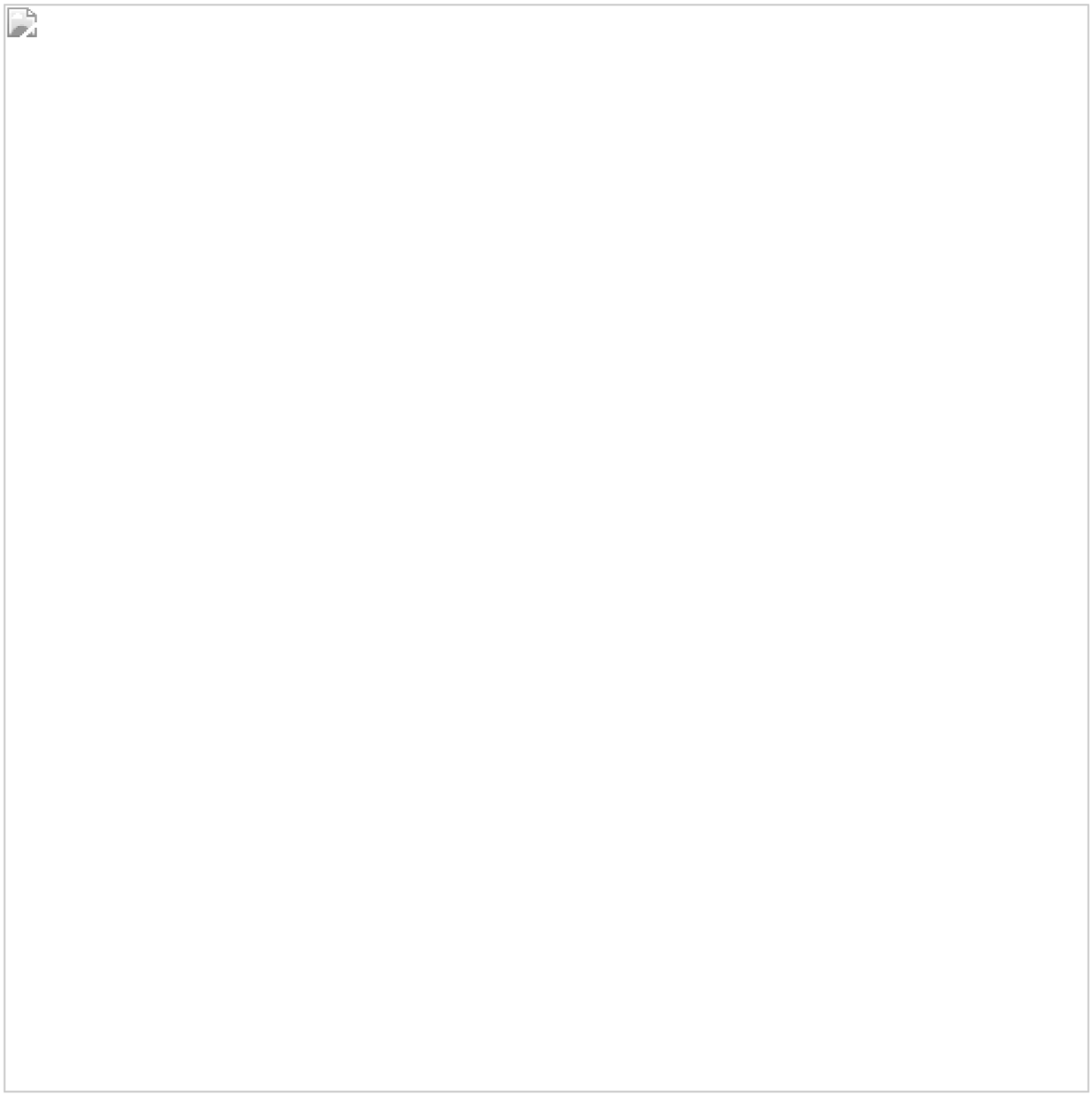
If a dragon moved in next door, what is the first thing you would want to ask him?

This book belongs to _____

The Reluctant Dragon · another picture



The Shepherd's News



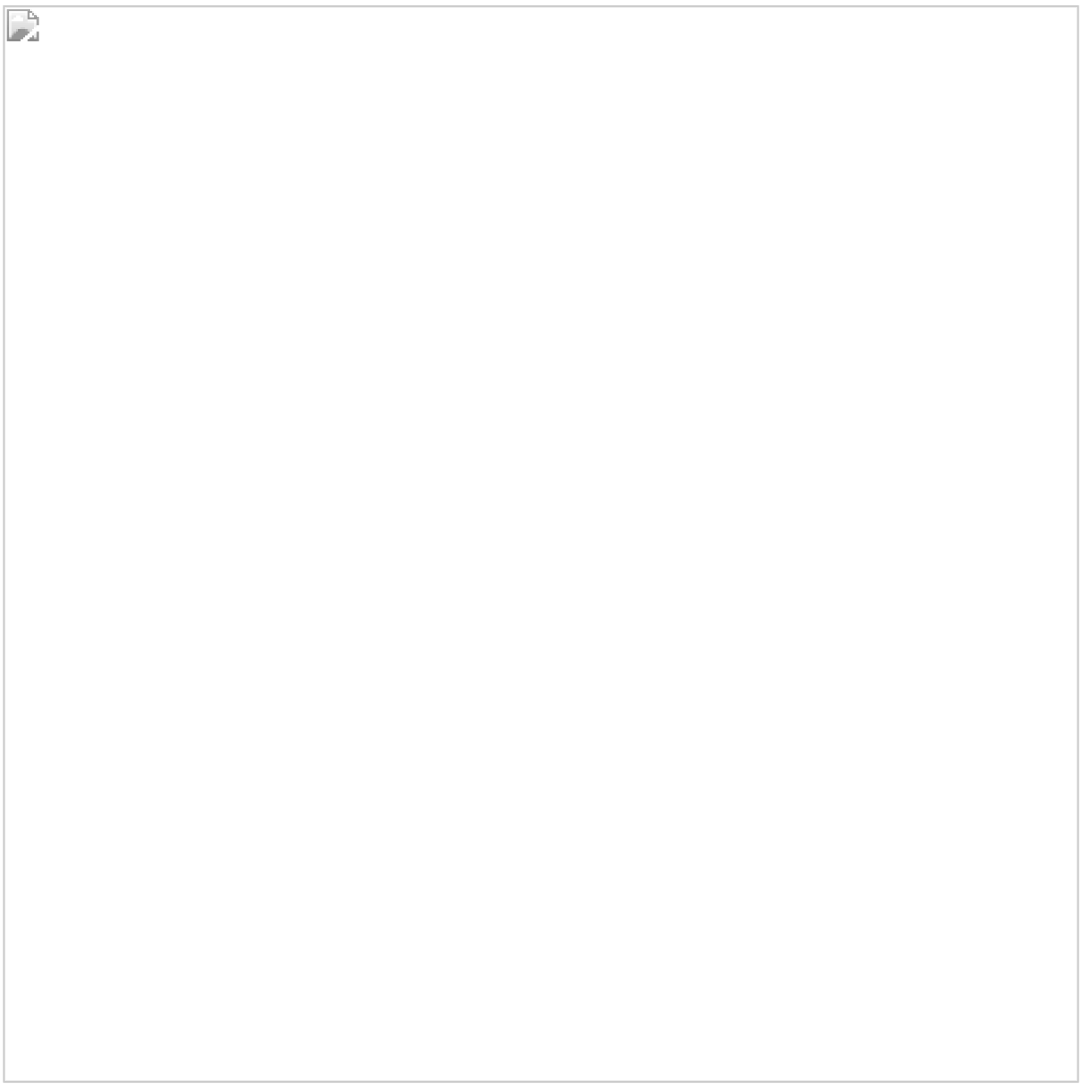
Long ago, in a cottage near the Downs, lived a shepherd, his wife, and their little son. The shepherd looked after the sheep all day on the hills. The Boy spent his days reading big books about animals and fairy-tales.

One evening the shepherd came home all of a tremble. "It's all up with me, Maria!" he cried. There was a cave up on the Downs, and something had been sighing and snoring inside it.

That evening he had seen it at last. It was "as big as four cart-horses," and covered with shiny scales. A dragon!

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the shepherd was so frightened of something that was only resting?



Think about it

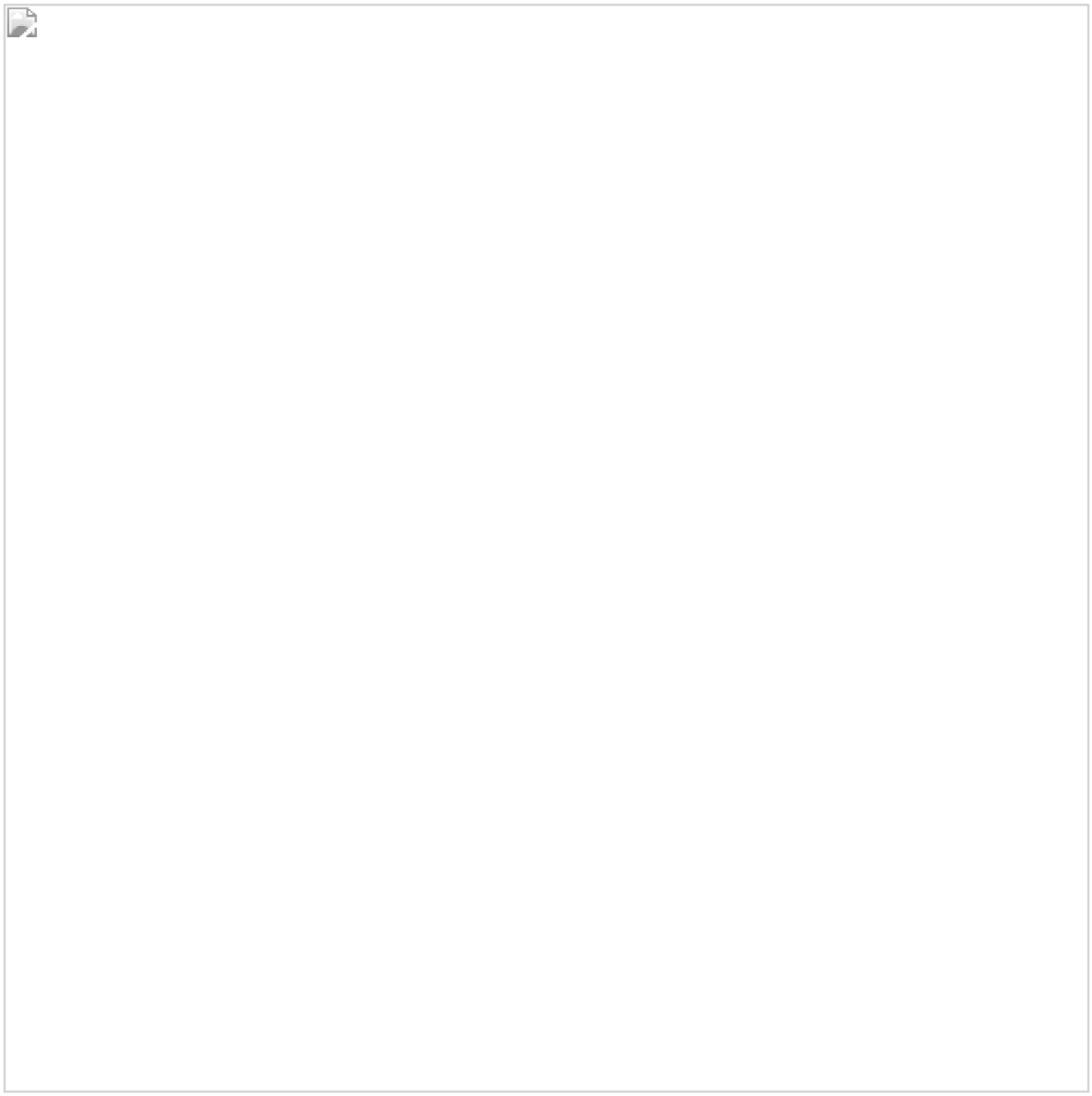
1. What did the Boy like to do best?

- ○ Read books
- ○ Race horses
- ○ Bake bread

2. What did the shepherd find in the cave?

- ○ A dragon
- ○ A lost lamb
- ○ A treasure chest

Only a Dragon



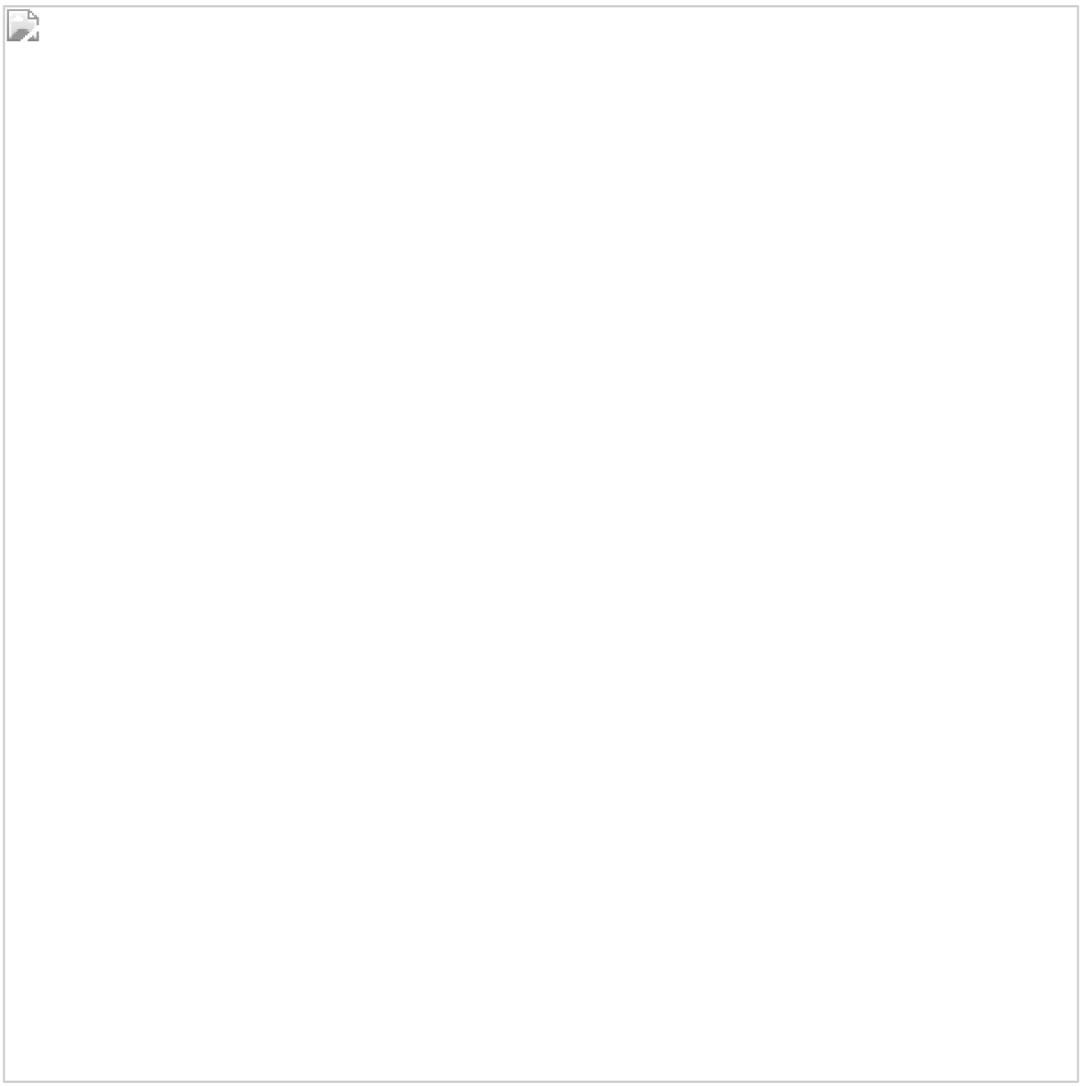
The Boy closed his book and yawned. “It’s only a dragon,” he said. “Don’t you worry.” He told his father that sheep and weather were his father’s line, but dragons were his.

He said he would go and have a talk with the dragon himself. “You don’t understand ’em a bit, and they’re very sensitive, you know!”

His mother felt sorry for the dragon, lying all alone up there without a hot supper. If the dragon was not respectable, she said, “our Boy’ll find it out quick enough.”

TALK ABOUT IT

What would you do if a grown-up was afraid of something you knew a lot about?



Think about it

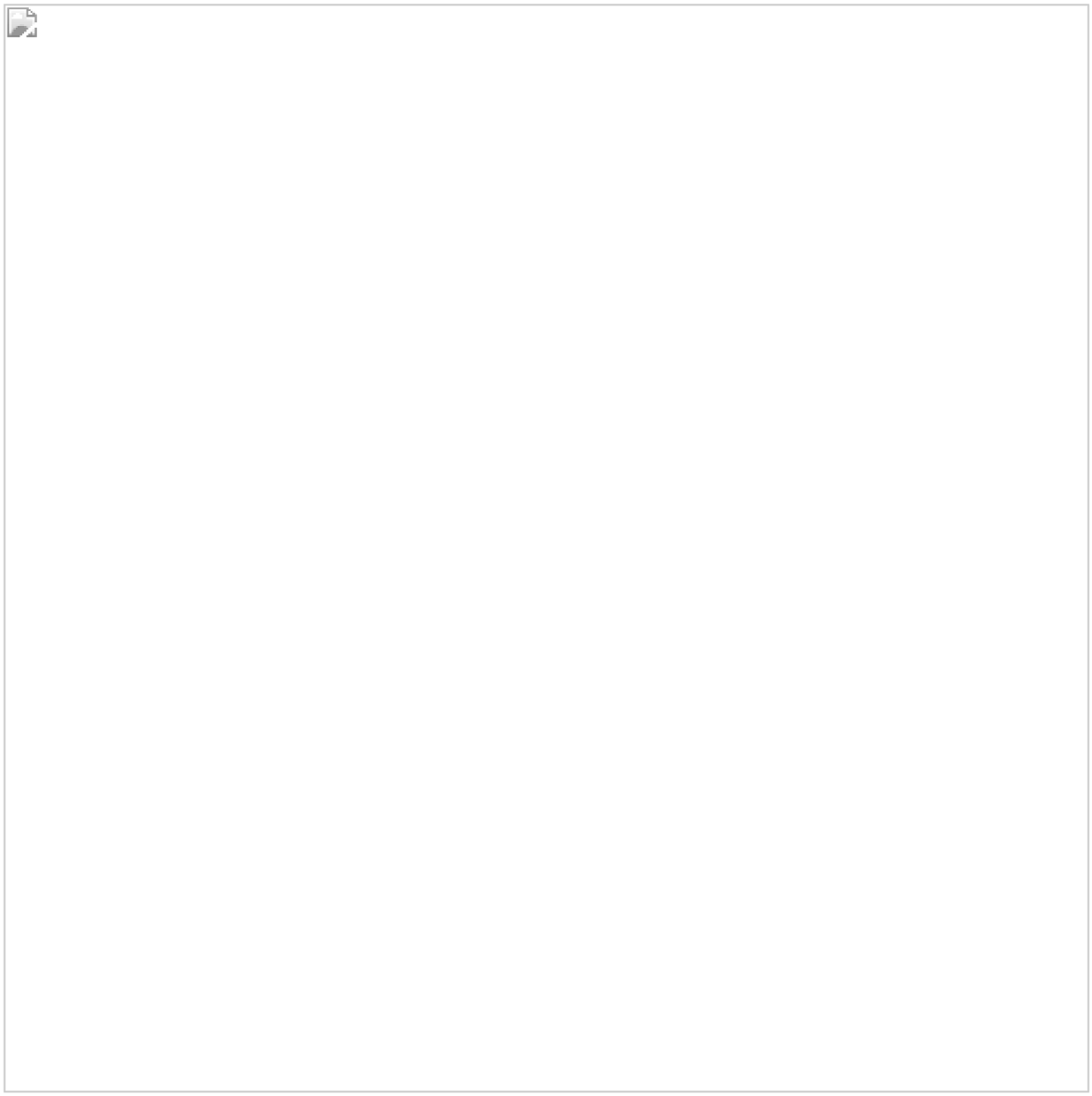
1. What did the Boy say about the dragon?

- ○ That it is only a dragon
- ○ That everyone should run away
- ○ That it is a giant bird

2. How did the mother feel about the dragon?

- ○ Sorry he was alone
- ○ She wanted a fight
- ○ She wanted to sell him

Hullo, Dragon!



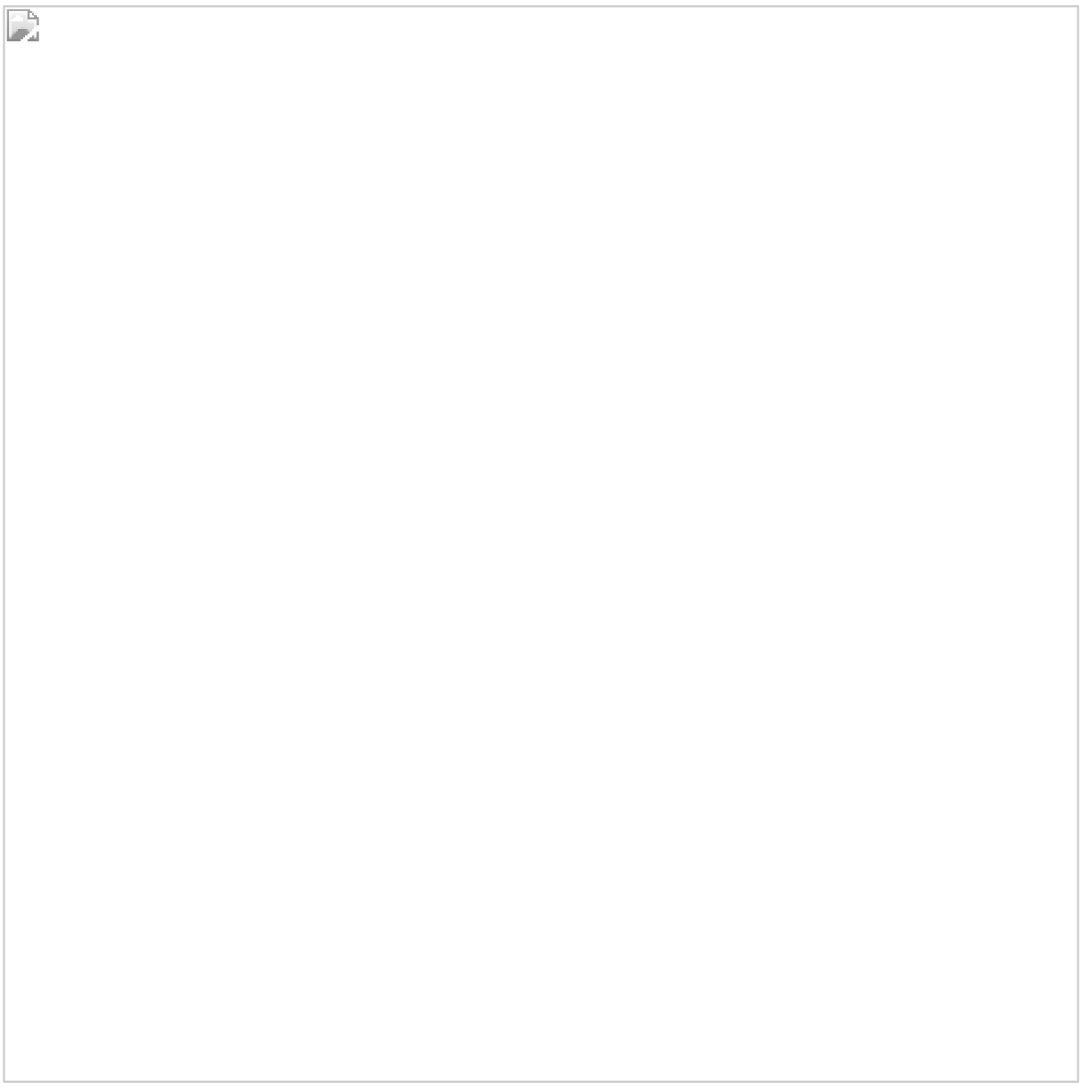
Next day, after tea, the Boy walked up the chalky track to the top of the Downs. There was the dragon, stretched out on the grass in front of his cave, purring. "None of my books ever told me that dragons purred!" said the Boy.

"Hullo, dragon!" he said. The dragon set his eyebrows severely. "Now don't you hit me," he said. But the Boy only sat down beside him.

The dragon told him a secret. He was a lazy dragon. He did not like rampaging and chasing knights. He liked his meals on time and a quiet snooze. And he loved to make up poetry.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you like to do that is quiet and just yours?



Think about it

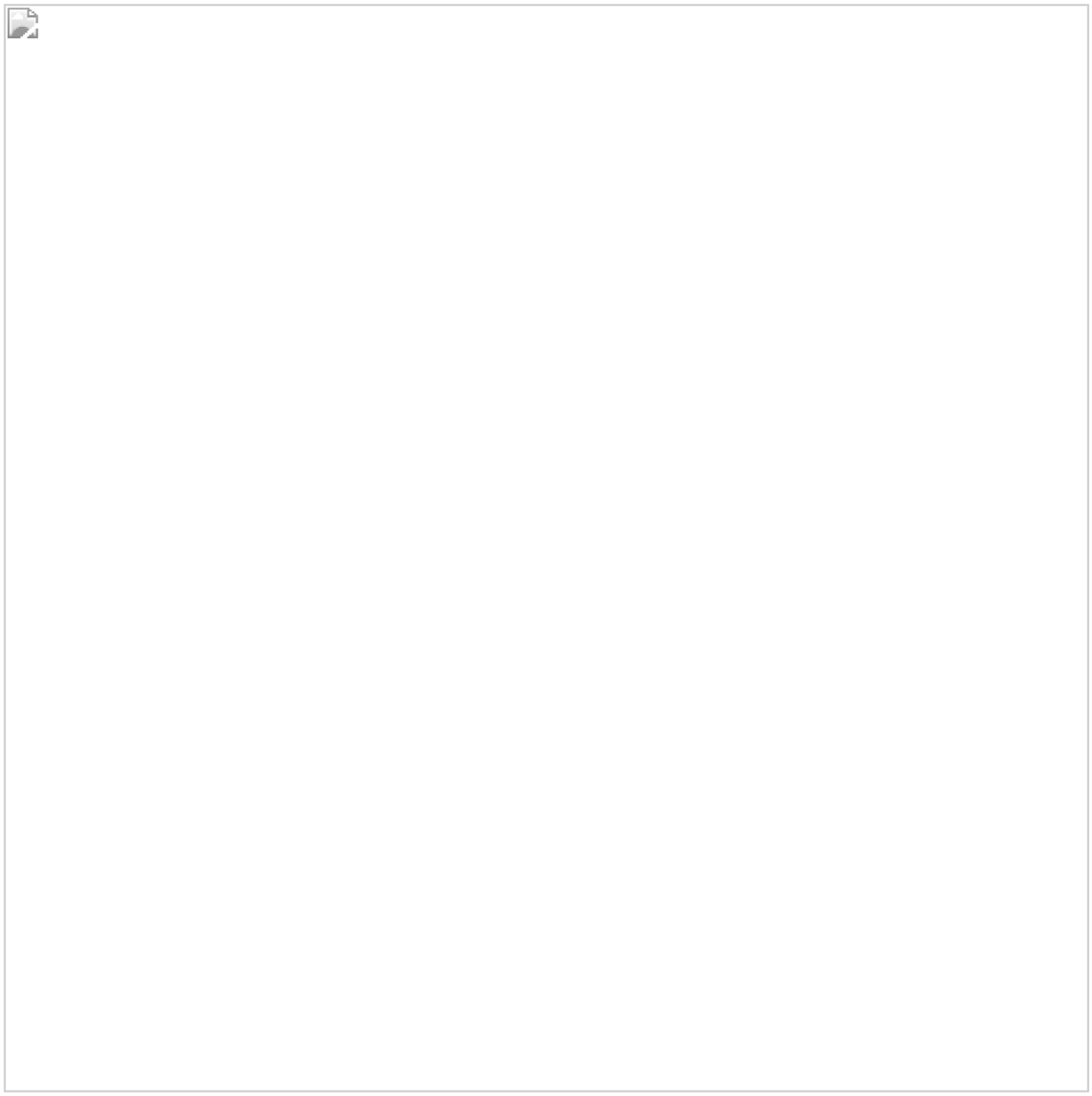
1. What sound did the dragon make?

- ○ He purred
- ○ He barked
- ○ He sang opera

2. What did the dragon love to do?

- ○ Make up poetry
- ○ Chase knights
- ○ Dig holes

A Dragon in the Village



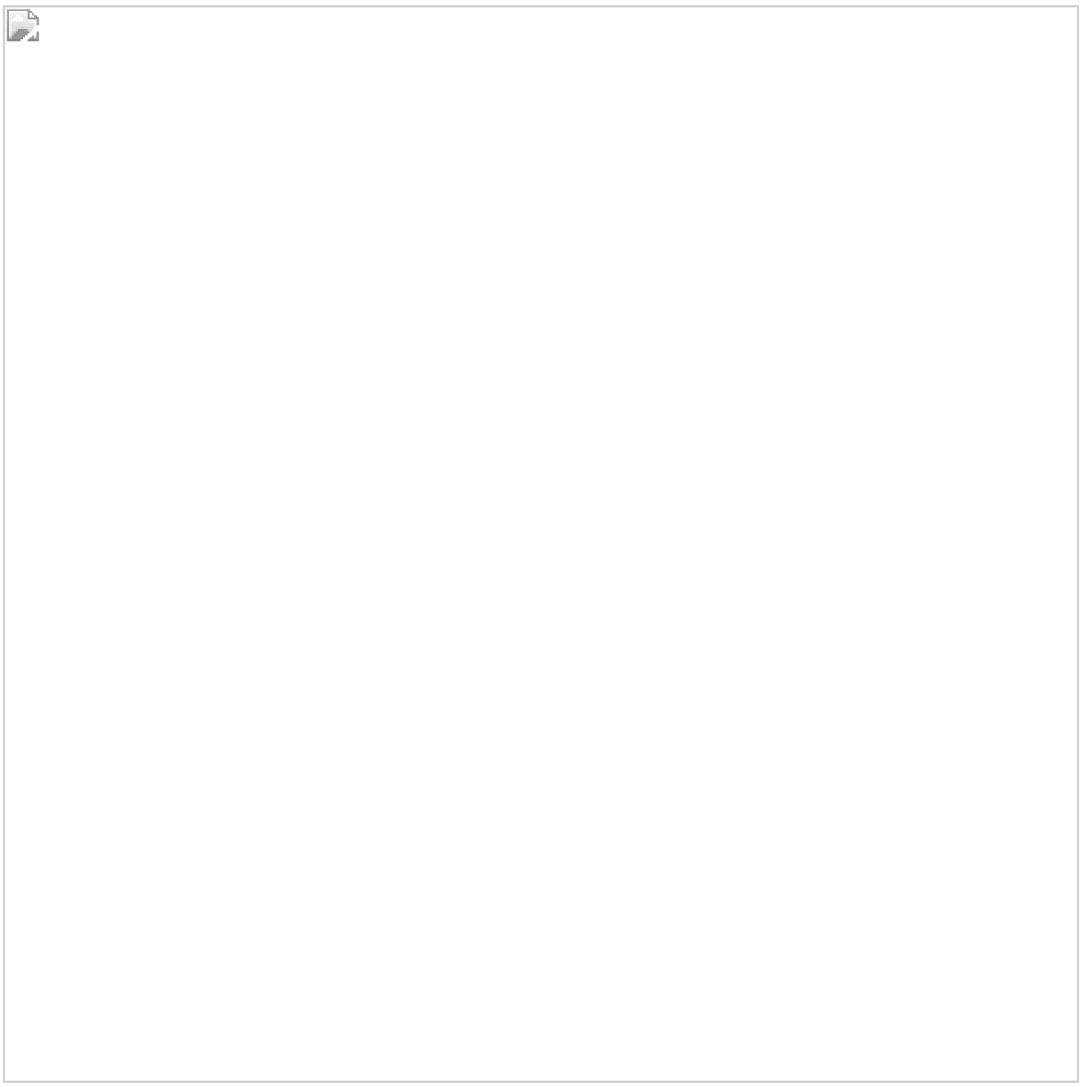
The Boy warned him that sooner or later people would come with spears and swords. But the dragon only wagged his head. “Character’ll bear the strictest investigation,” he said, and asked if the Boy would like to hear a little sonnet.

The Boy’s mother would not say hello to the dragon, but she let the Boy spend his evenings with him, so long as he was home by nine. Many a pleasant night they had.

Soon the villagers heard about the dragon, and they were very frightened. They all agreed he must go. But nobody was brave enough to try.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the Boy’s mother would not say hello to the dragon, but still let the Boy visit?



Think about it

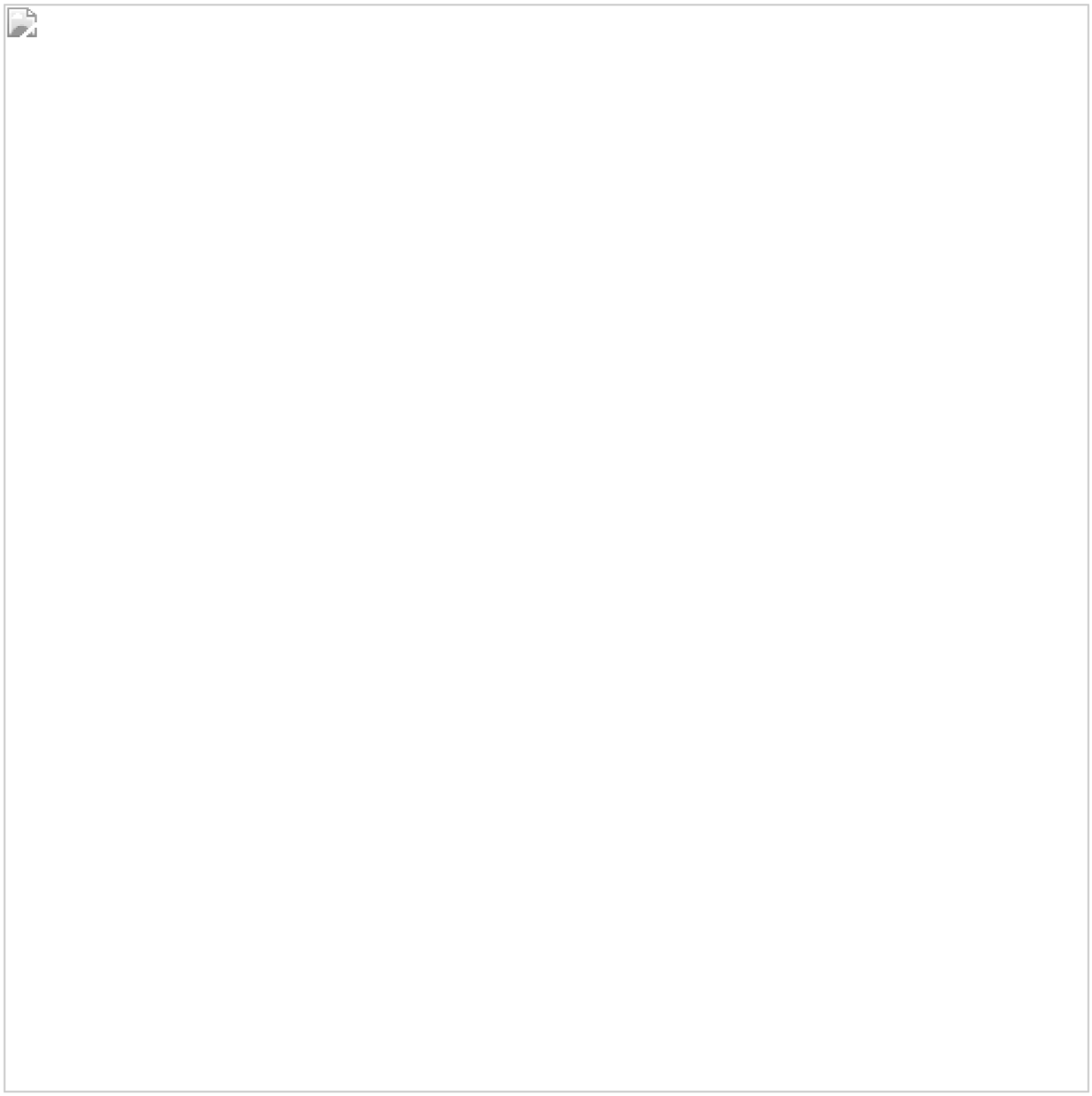
1. What time did the Boy have to be home?

- ○ Nine o'clock
- ○ Noon
- ○ Midnight

2. Did anyone in the village go to fight the dragon?

- ○ No, nobody was brave enough
- ○ Yes, the baker
- ○ Yes, the shepherd

St. George Comes



One day the Boy walked into the village and found it dressed up. There were carpets hanging from the windows and flowers on the street, and the church-bells were ringing. “He’s a-coming,” said a friend. “Why, St. George, of course!”

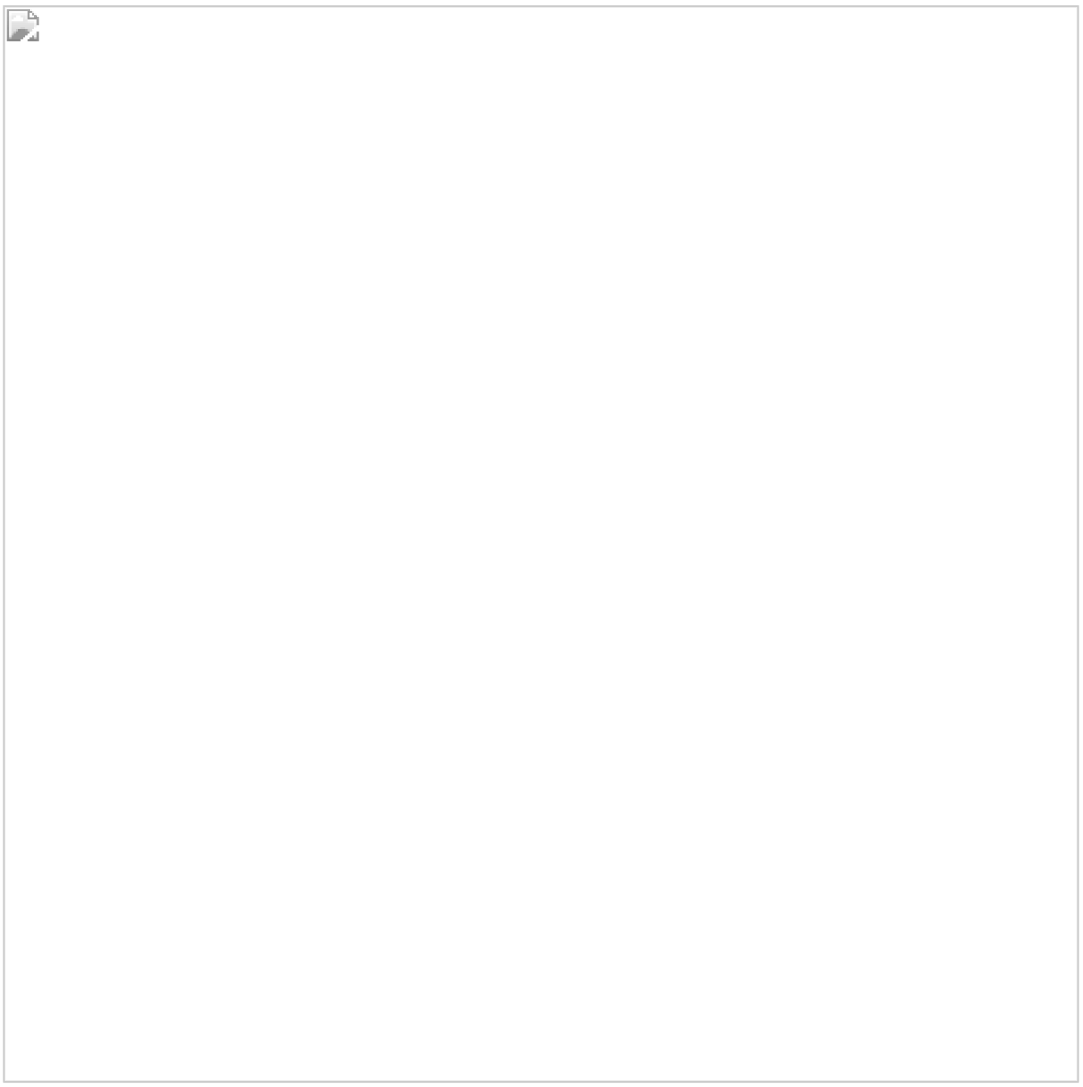
St. George rode slowly up the street on a great war-horse. His armour was inlaid with gold, and his face was gracious and gentle, until you caught the sternness in his eyes. The Boy’s heart stood still.

Then the Boy raced up the hill. “It’s all up, dragon!” he shouted. “He’s coming! He’s here now!”

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think the Boy was thinking when he saw St. George?

St. George Comes · another picture



Think about it

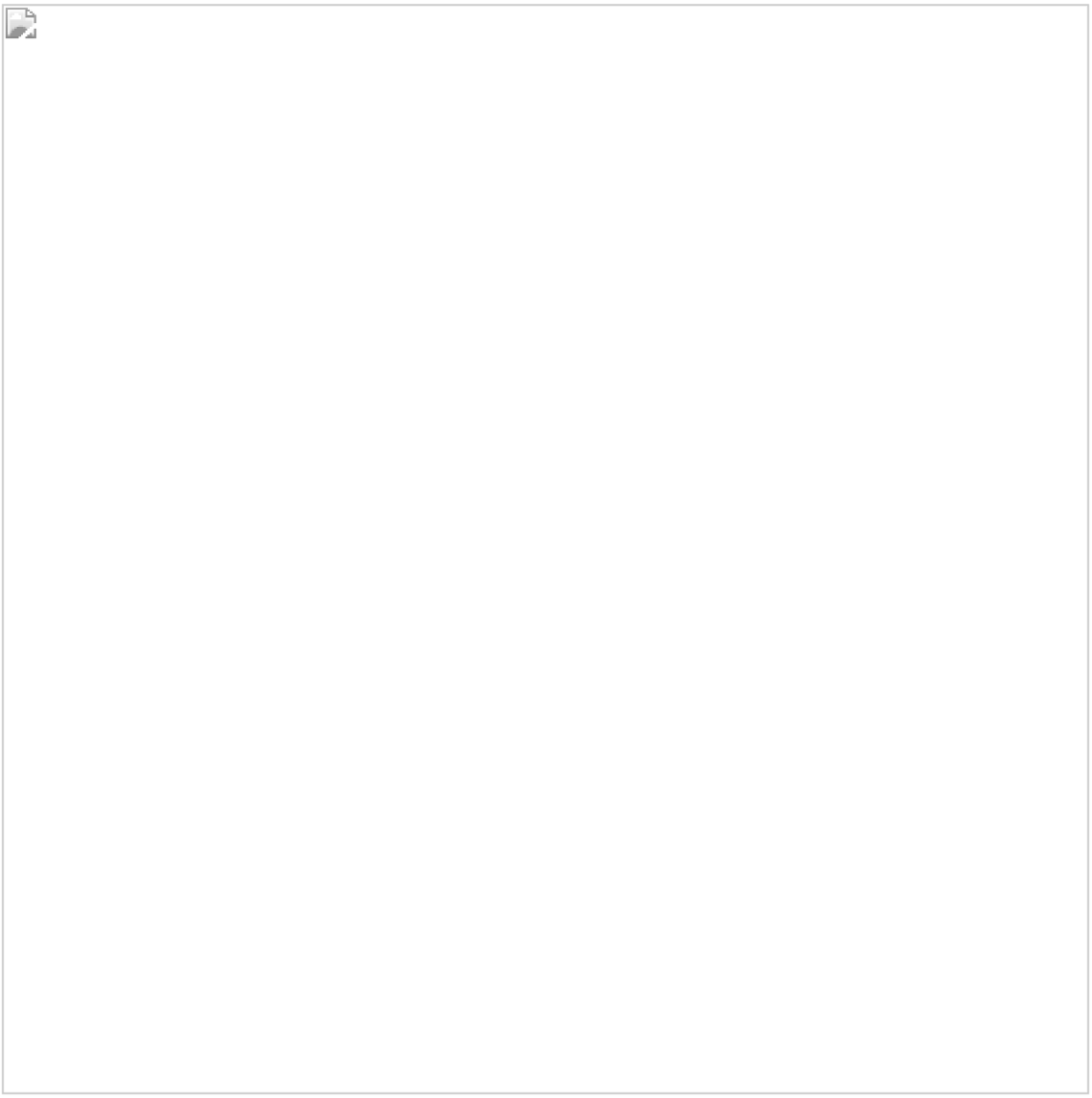
1. Who came to the village?

- ○ St. George
- ○ A circus
- ○ The king

2. Why did the Boy run up the hill?

- ○ To warn the dragon
- ○ To fetch his mother
- ○ To ring a bell

I Won't Fight



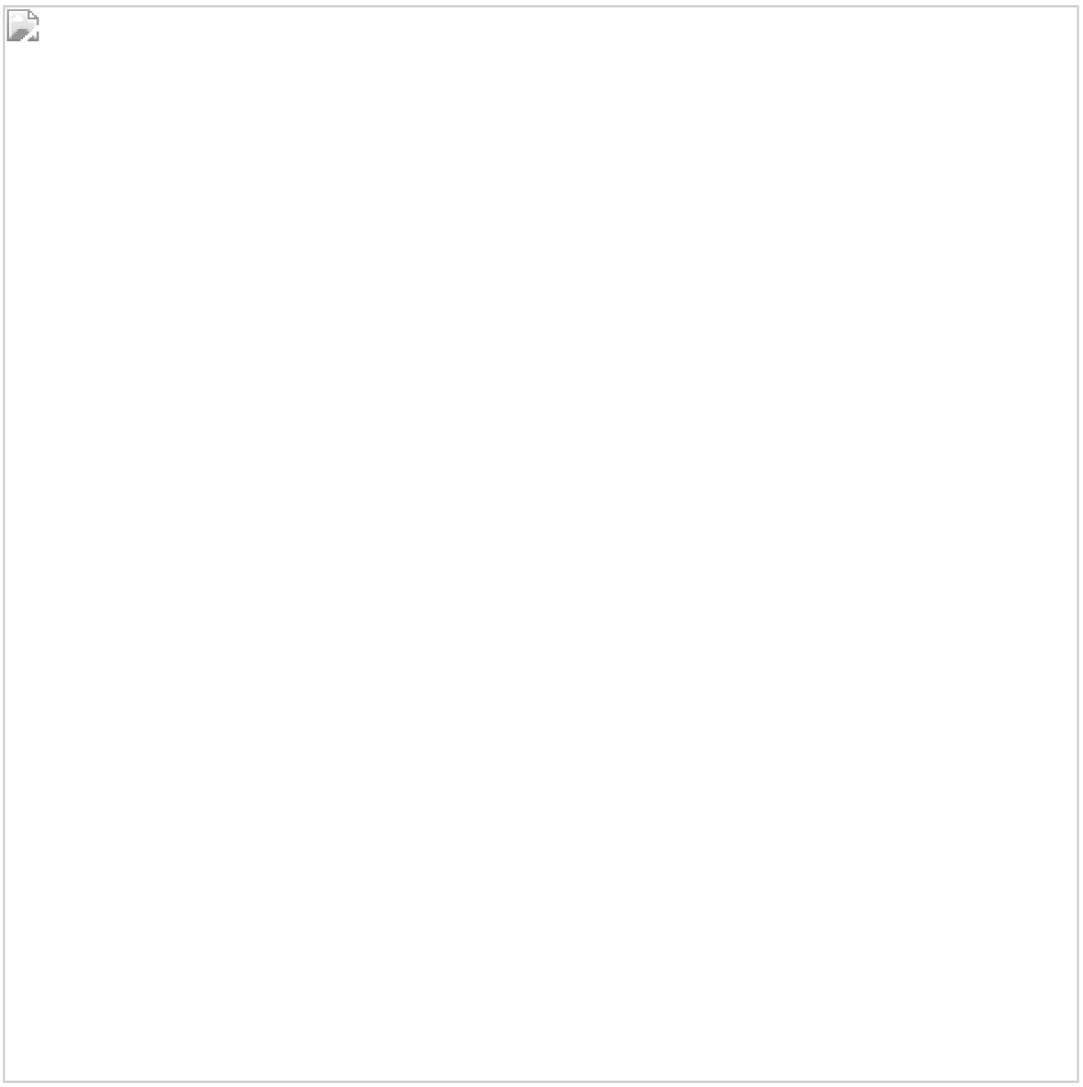
The dragon was rubbing his scales with a house-flannel the Boy's mother had lent him, till he shone like a great turquoise. When he heard the news, he moaned, "O deary, deary me."

"I can't fight and I won't fight," he said. He had never fought in his life, and he was not going to begin now. "You'll be able to arrange something," he told the Boy. "you're such a manager."

The Boy trudged back to the village feeling very low. "Arrange things indeed!" he said to himself.

TALK ABOUT IT

Do you know anyone who leaves things for someone else to fix? What do you think about that?



Think about it

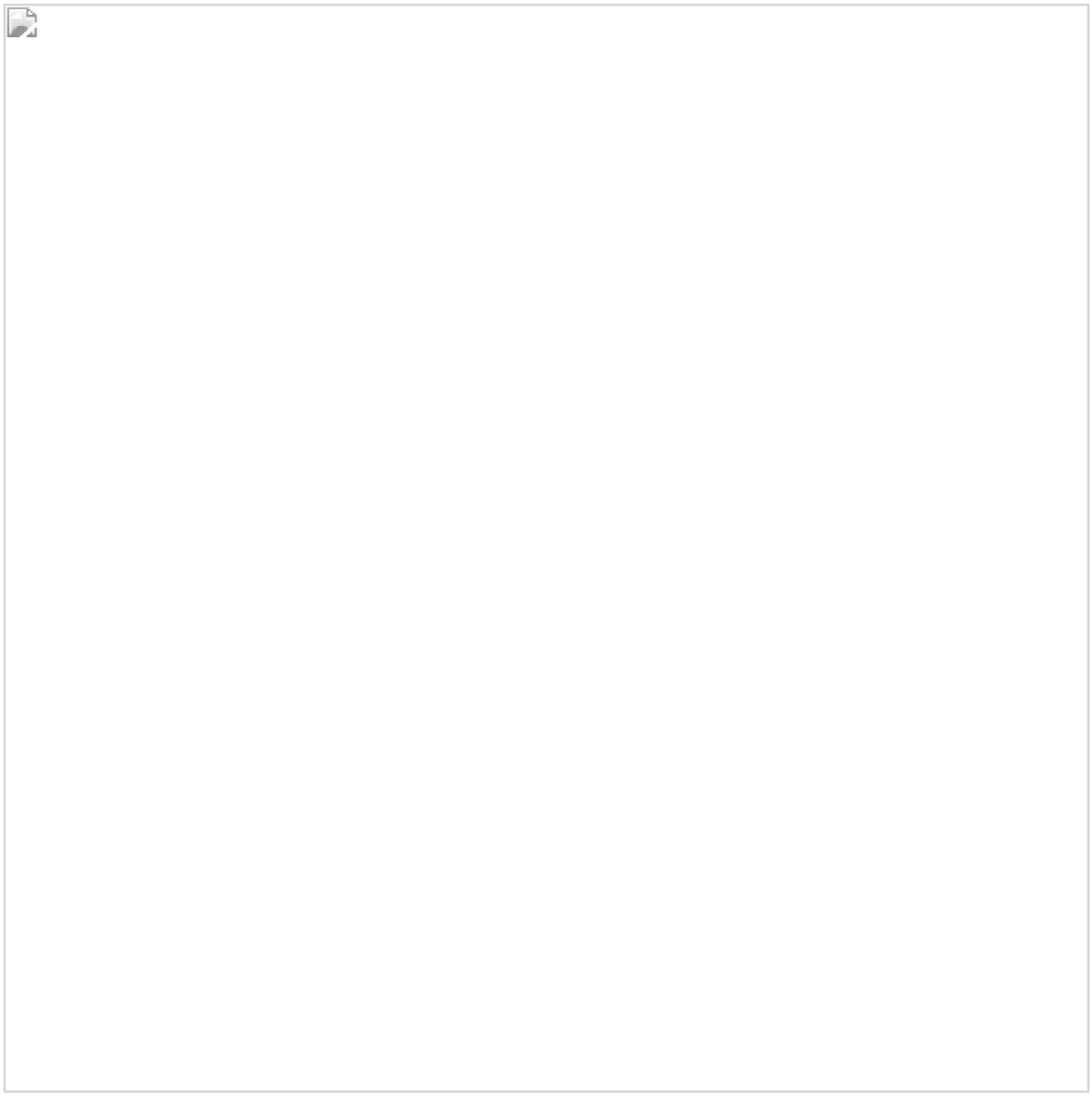
1. What did the dragon say about fighting?

- ○ He would not fight
- ○ He would fight at once
- ○ He wanted a big sword

2. Who did the dragon want to fix everything?

- ○ The Boy
- ○ The shepherd
- ○ The mother

The Boy Talks to St. George



The Boy found St. George alone at the inn. “I want to talk to you about this little matter of the dragon,” he said. “The fact is, this is a good dragon.”

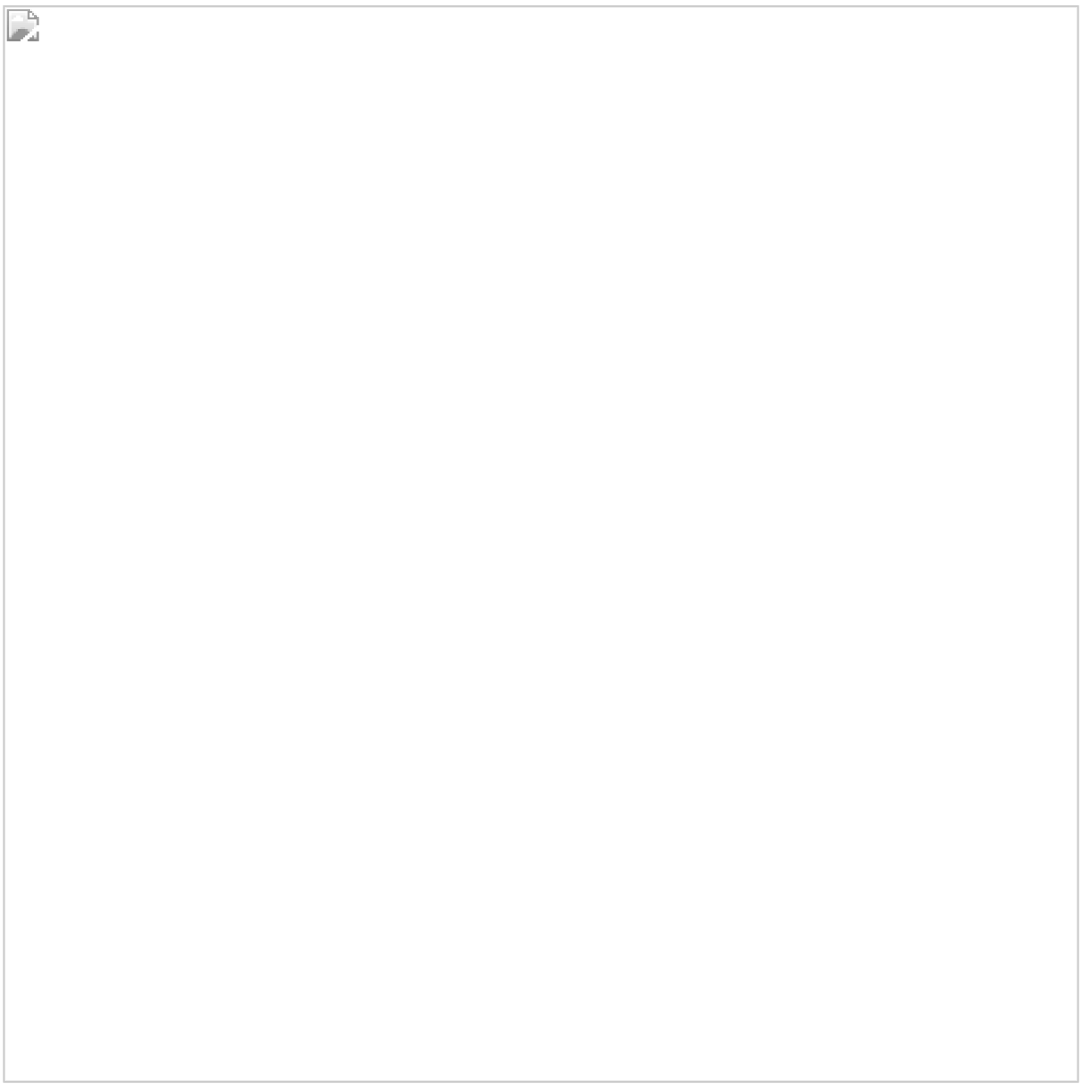
He told him how kind the dragon was. St. George smiled. “I like a fellow who sticks up for his friends,” he said. The tales he had heard of the dragon, he said, were “not always quite convincing.”

“would you mind strolling up with me and seeing the dragon?” asked the Boy. “Perhaps there won’t have to be any fight after all,” said St. George kindly. “Oh, but I hope there will, though!” said the Boy.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the Boy stuck up for the dragon so much?

The Boy Talks to St. George · another picture



Think about it

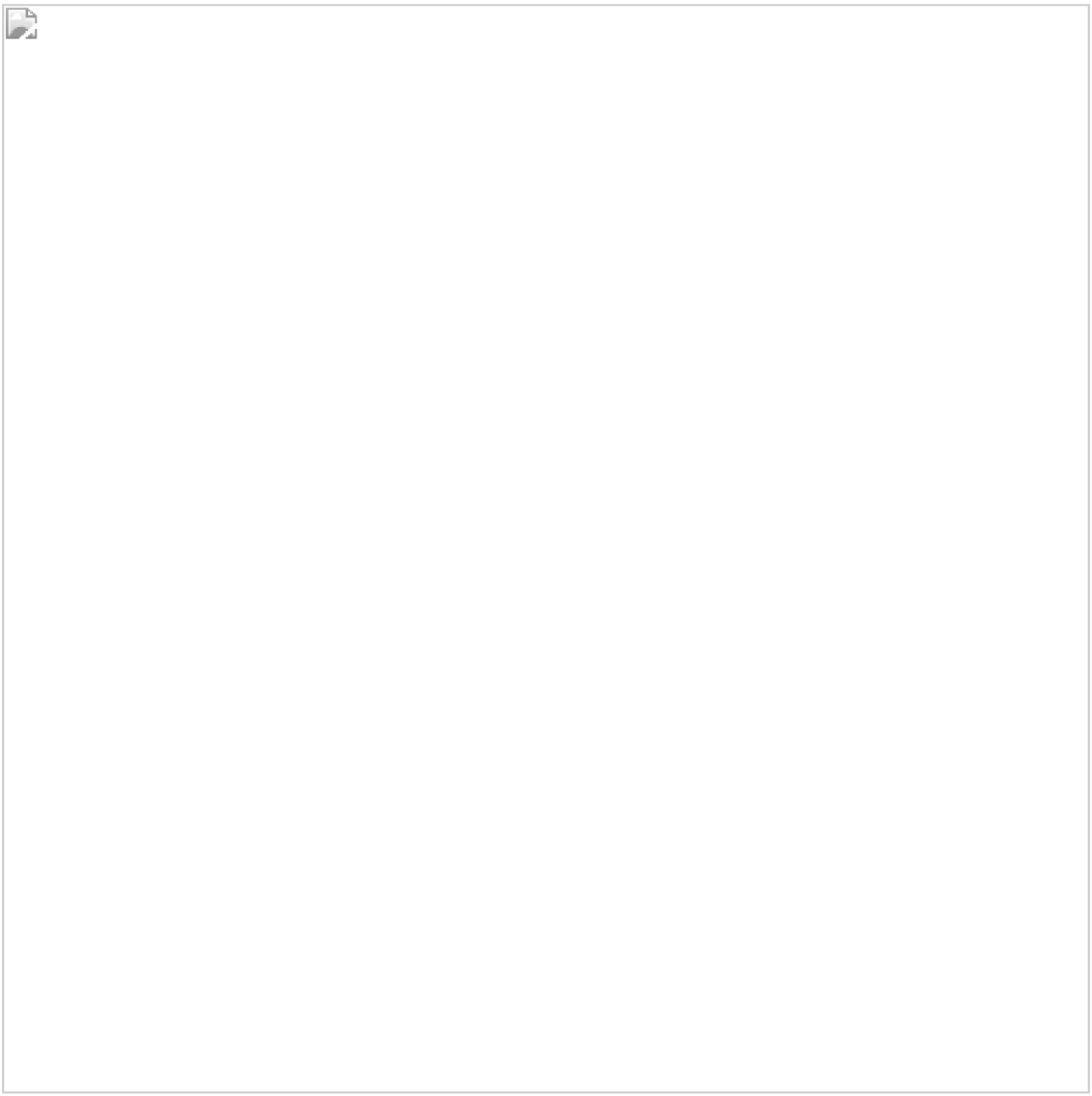
1. What did the Boy say about the dragon?

- ○ That this is a good dragon
- ○ That he is a scary monster
- ○ That he is a big liar

2. Where did the Boy take St. George?

- ○ Up to see the dragon
- ○ Back to the shepherd
- ○ To the sea

The Plan



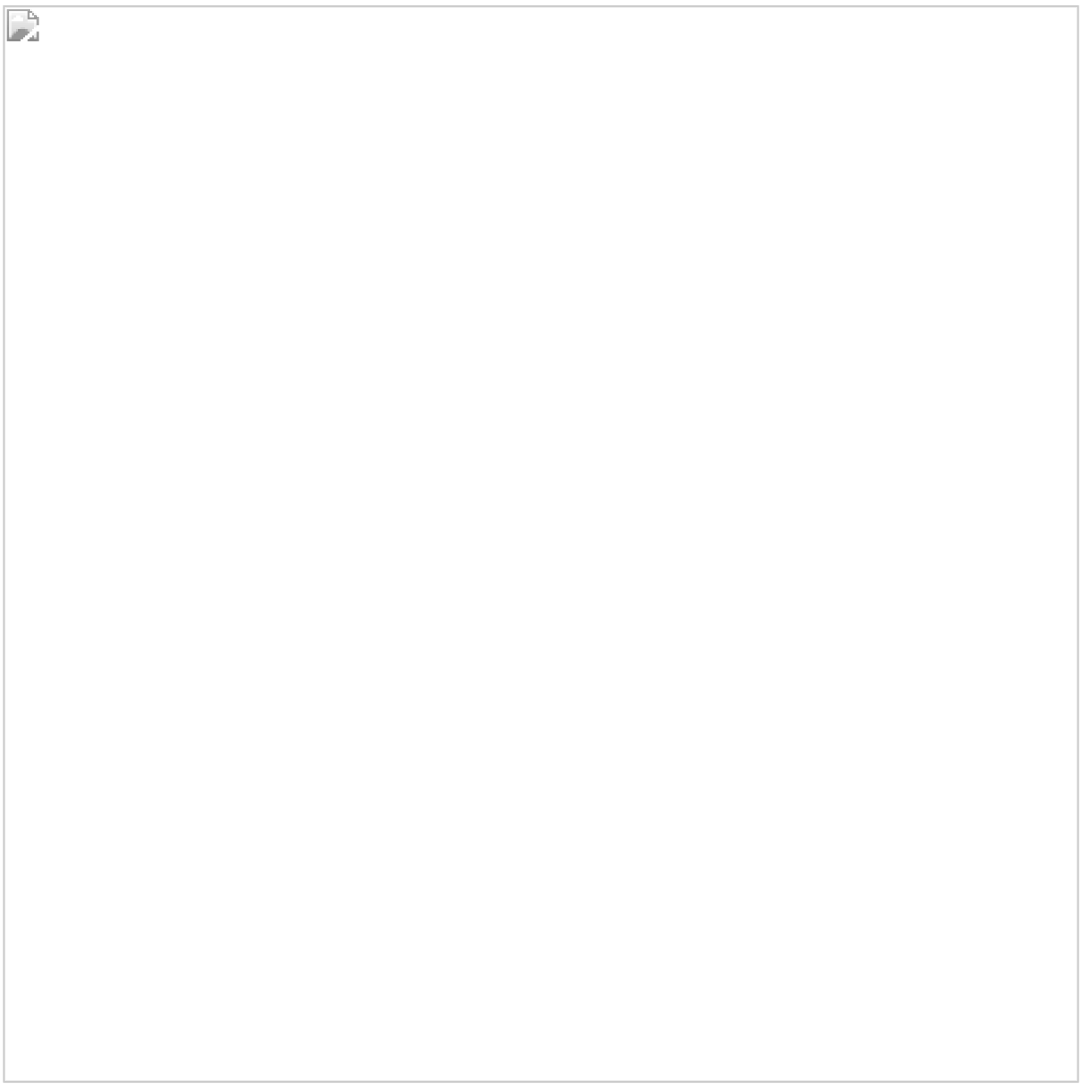
The dragon woke up with a start. “Charming weather we’re having!” he said. At first he would not hear of a fight. Then St. George said his golden armour against the dragon’s blue coils would be a fine sight. “Think what a picture it would make!”

They agreed the Saint would spear the dragon in a spare place under the neck, where the thick folds of skin were. At the first spot he tried, the dragon giggled. “No, that place won’t do at all.”

And then, said St. George, there would be the usual banquet. “I’m going into Society, I am,” said the dragon happily.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the dragon said yes when he heard about the banquet?



Think about it

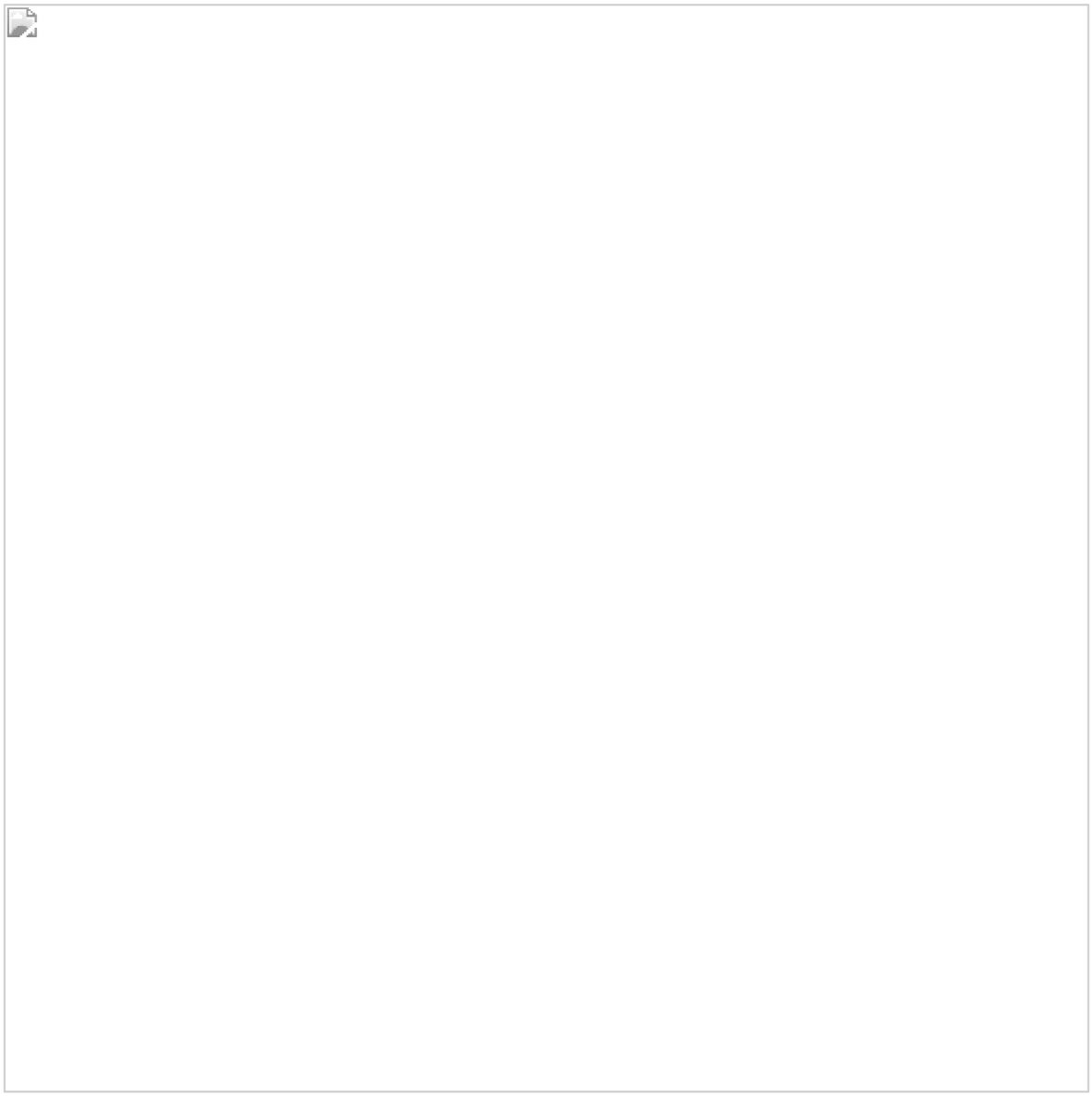
1. What did the dragon want most?

- ○ To go to the banquet
- ○ To win a prize
- ○ To be a king

2. Where would St. George spear him?

- ○ In a spare place under the neck
- ○ On his head
- ○ On his tail

The Fight



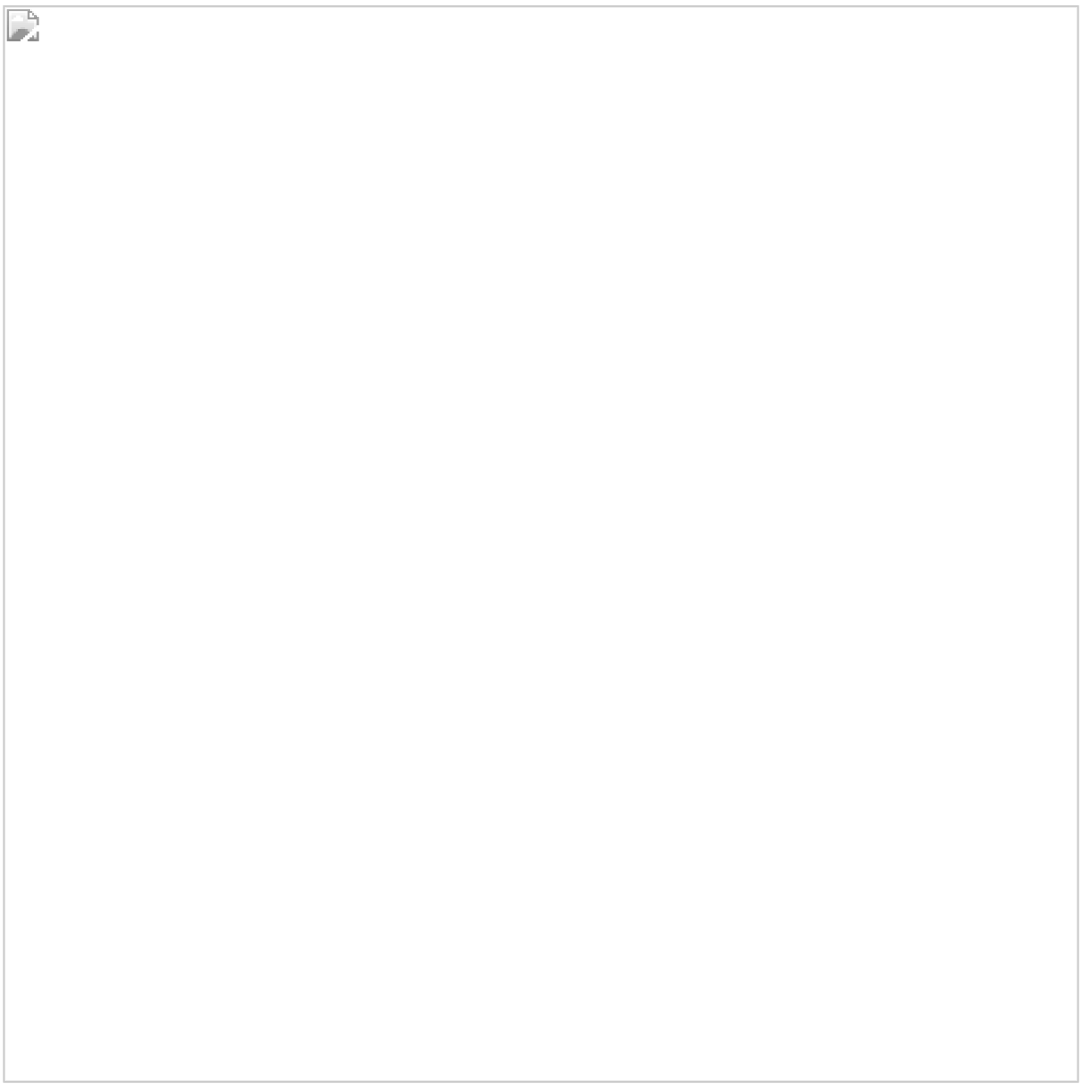
Next morning the people came up to the Downs in their Sunday clothes, carrying baskets. They picked their places carefully, in case the dragon won.

St. George rode out on his tall war-horse, his golden armour shining. Then the dragon pranced out of a cloud of smoke, shining and sea-blue. “Oo-oo-oo!” said everybody. “Didn’t think he had it in him!” thought the Boy.

They charged. “Missed!” yelled the crowd. The horse carried the Saint right past. St. George smiled at the Boy and held up three fingers. Round Three would be the last.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the dragon was so happy to put on a show?



Think about it

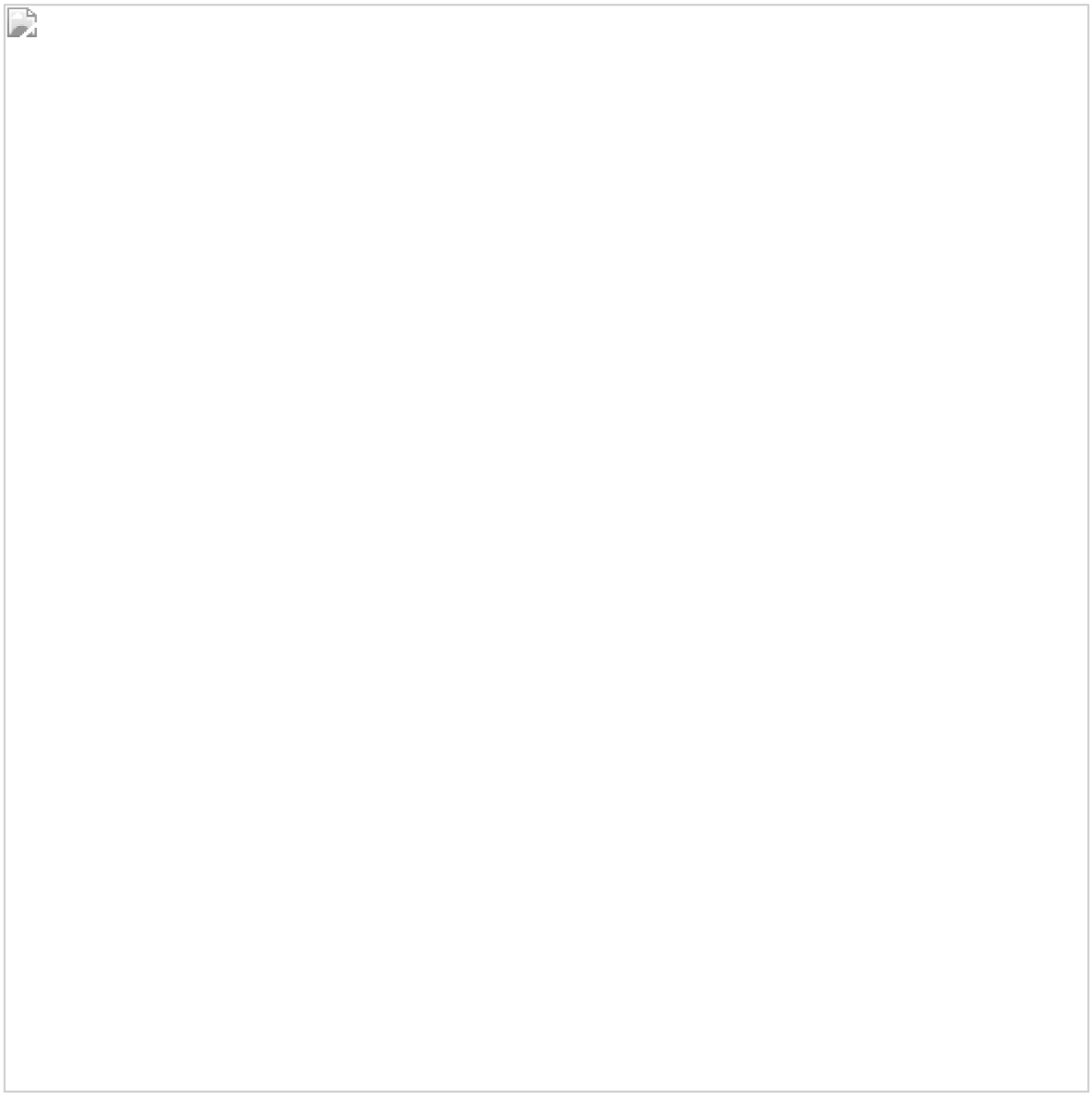
1. What did the crowd say when the dragon came out?

- ○ Oo-oo-oo!
- ○ Boo!
- ○ Go home!

2. How many fingers did St. George hold up?

- ○ Three
- ○ One
- ○ Five

A Wink and a Spear



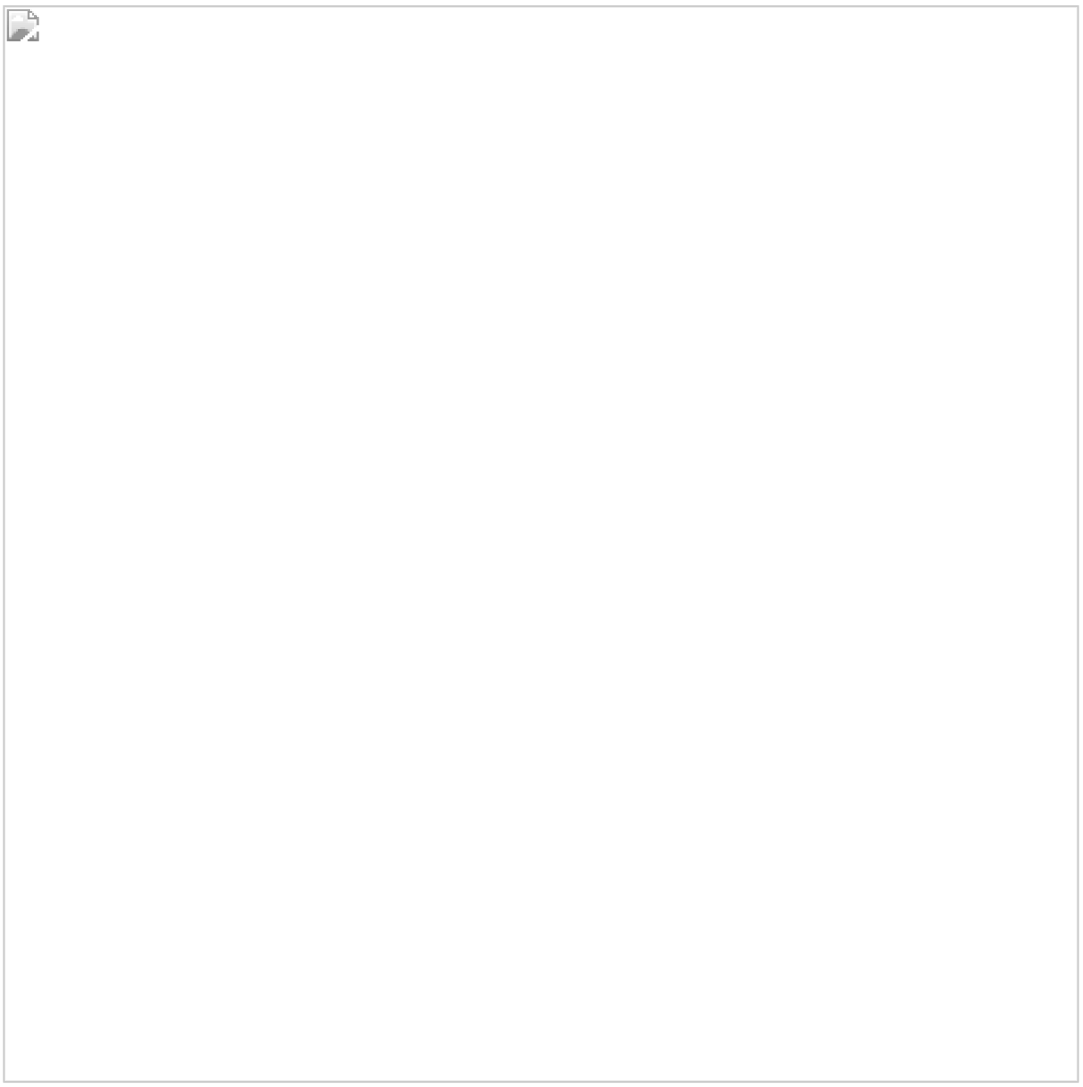
The dragon leaped about the Downs, and the crowd began to cheer for him. “It’s been a jolly fight, St. George!” said the Boy. “Can’t you let it last a bit longer?”

“Well, I think I’d better not,” said the Saint. “I’ll just finish him off this round.” With a flash of the Saint’s arm, the dragon was pinned to the ground.

The Boy ran in. The dragon lifted one large eyelid, winked solemnly, and lay still again. “Bain’t you goin’ to cut ’is ’ed orf, master?” asked someone. “Well, not today, I think,” said St. George. First they would all go and have some refreshment.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think the Boy felt when the dragon winked?



Think about it

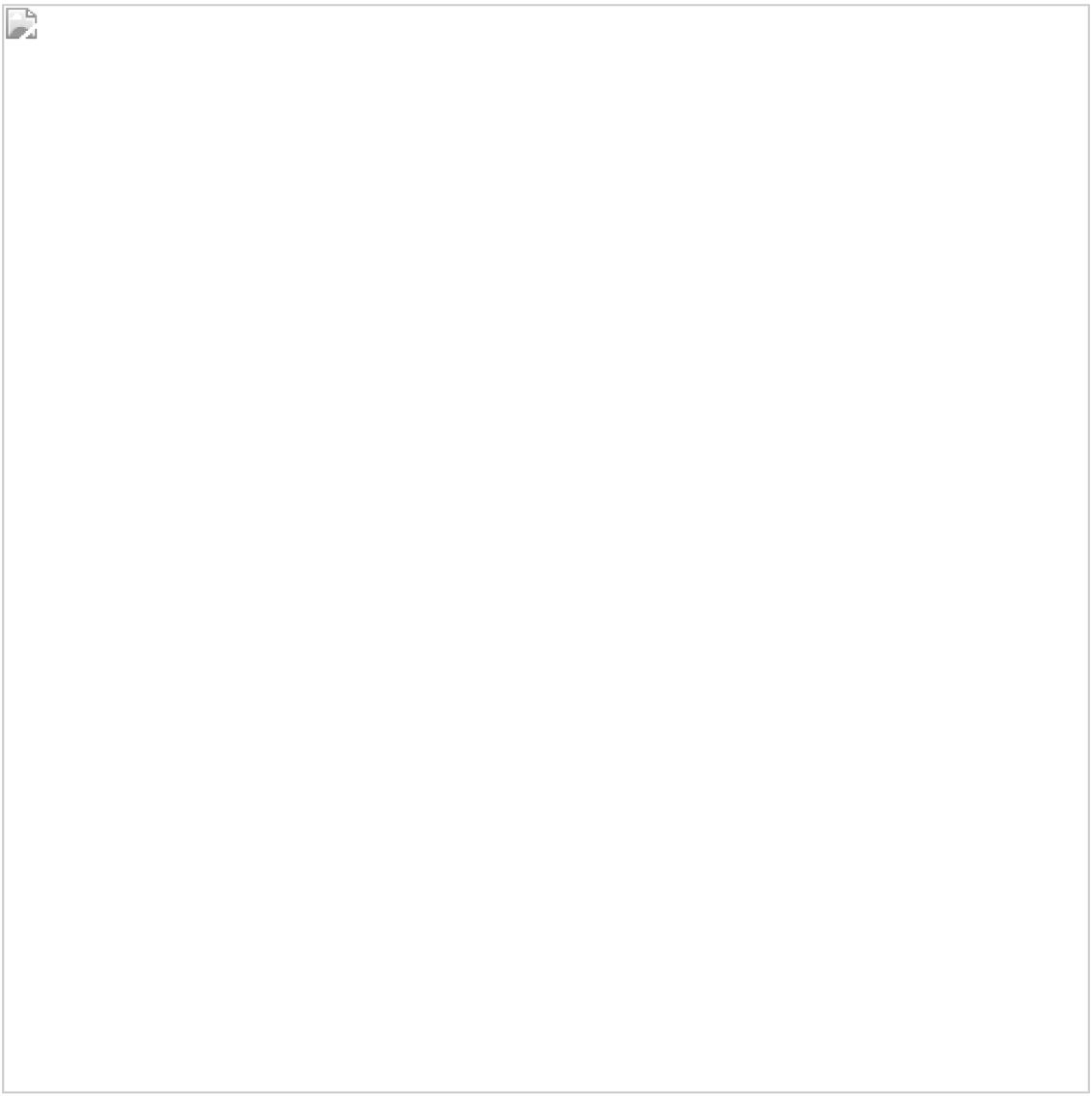
1. What did the dragon do when the Boy ran up?

- ○ He winked
- ○ He roared
- ○ He ran away

2. What did St. George say about cutting off the dragon's head?

- ○ Not today
- ○ Yes, right now
- ○ Maybe tomorrow

The Banquet



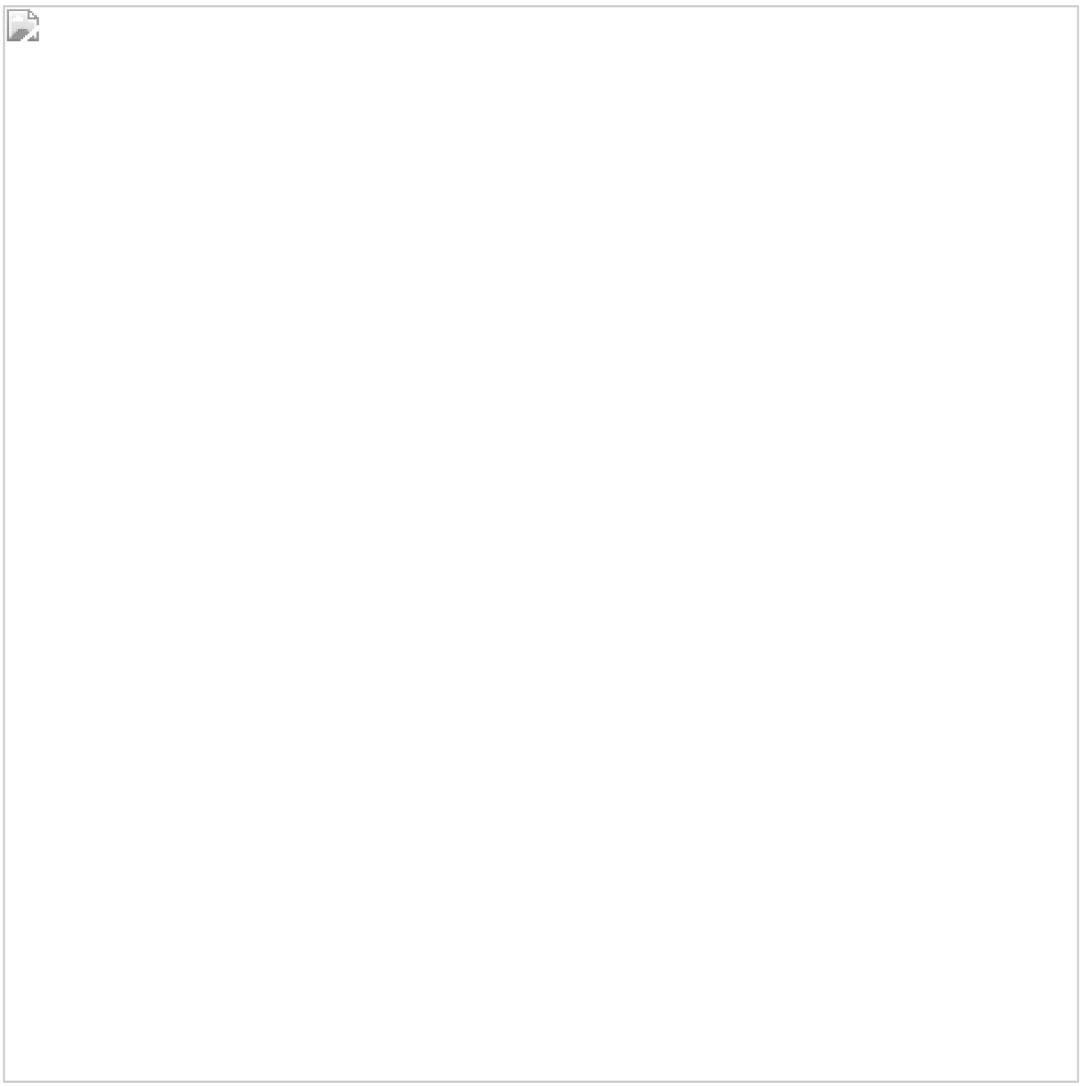
Back in the village, St. George made a speech. The dragon had been thinking things over, and if the people were good, perhaps he would stay. “So they must make friends,” he said, “and not be prejudiced.”

Then everyone went to the banquet. The nice thing about a banquet is that it comes when something is over, “and there’s nothing more to worry about, and to-morrow seems a long way off.”

The dragon said the right thing to everyone and was the life and soul of the evening. “Look here! you will see me home afterwards, won’t you?” he kept asking the Boy, and the Boy always nodded.

TALK ABOUT IT

Who would you want to invite to a feast, and what would you want to say to them?



Think about it

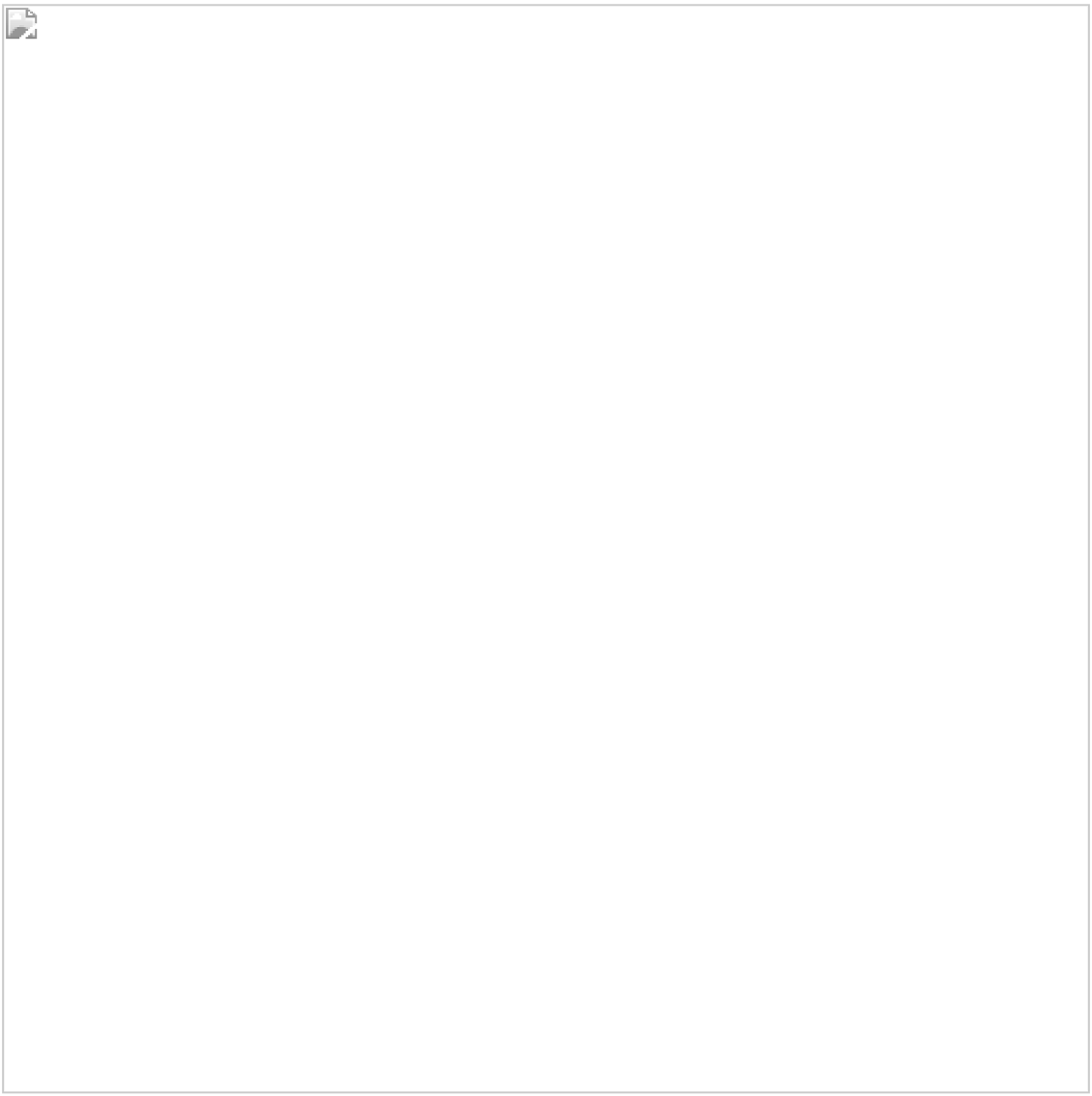
1. What did St. George say the people must do?

- ○ Make friends with the dragon
- ○ Build a wall
- ○ Hide in their houses

2. Who was the life and soul of the banquet?

- ○ The dragon
- ○ St. George
- ○ The shepherd

Home Together



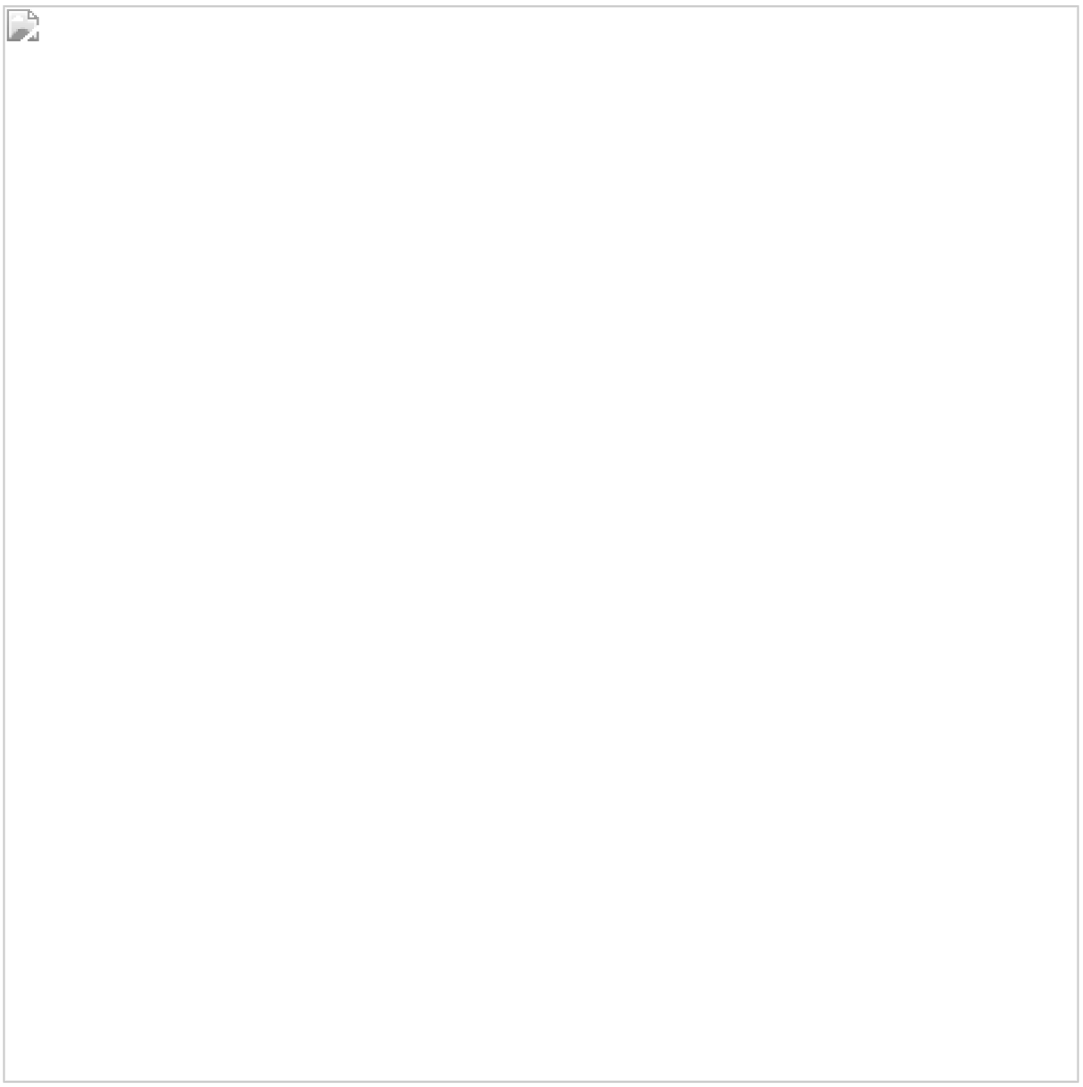
After the banquet, the dragon sat down in the road. “Jolly night it’s been!” he said. Then his chin sank on his chest and he fell asleep.

The tired Boy sat down by the sleeping dragon and cried. St. George found him there. “Now don’t take on,” he said. “I’ll stand by you, and we’ll both see him home.”

He woke the dragon. “Poor little chap!” cried the dragon, and jumped up. So they set off up the hill arm-in-arm, “the Saint, the Dragon, and the Boy.” An old song drifted back. “I can’t be certain which of them was singing, but I think it was the Dragon!”

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think the Boy was glad of when St. George came out?



Think about it

1. What did the dragon do in the road after the banquet?

- ○ He fell asleep
- ○ He went to the fair
- ○ He wrote a poem

2. Who helped the Boy see the dragon home?

- ○ St. George
- ○ The villagers
- ○ The shepherd

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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