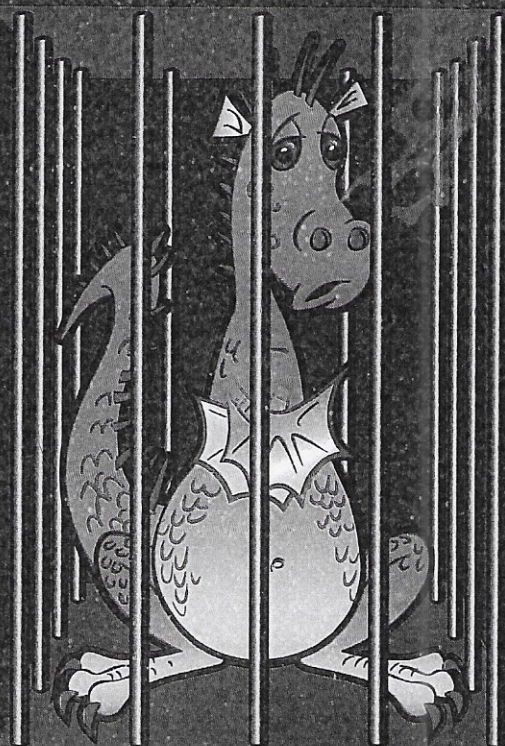


THE ALLEY

1. Zoe was glad to get a lift home from school with her mum. She couldn't wait to get out of her school clothes and relax. So when her mum said she wanted to quickly pop into the Asian supermarket, Zoe groaned. Her mum always took ages in that shop; there was nothing 'quick' about it.
2. Not wanting to go into the shop with its weird foods and smells, Zoe waited in the car. Bored, she stared out the window. Then she noticed an alley she'd never seen before, just beside the Asian supermarket.
3. Zoe stared, curious, until she suddenly noticed a thin line of smoke curling upwards. Smoke! Now she would have to go and check it out. She got out of the car and walked quickly to the alley. She walked carefully in. It was very dark in there. She thought maybe this wasn't such a good idea.
4. The alley was full of things from the Asian supermarket. Boxes and tins that smelled strange, crates and bags and ... a cage, right at the back. This seemed to be where the smoke was coming from.
5. Zoe moved warily towards the cage. When she got close, she saw what was making the smoke. A dragon! A small dragon, with a blue chest and gold wings, wrapped tightly around its body in the small cage. The smoke drifted slowly from its nose. Zoe stared, speechless. Two sad eyes the colour of sapphires stared back her. Then it spoke.
6. 'Please', it pleaded. Its voice was deep, like a wise old man. 'Can you set me free? So long ago I was taken from my home and put in this cage. They pull off my scales, one by one, to sell for a great price. It hurts. Please help me. Set me free.'
7. Zoe was stunned. Could she trust this creature? How did she know it wasn't dangerous? She didn't, but ... it wasn't right to keep an animal like this. She opened the cage door. The whole alley suddenly lit up with a flash of bright gold and blue light as the dragon stepped out, opened its wings and flew up into the sky.
8. Leaving the alley in a daze, Zoe wondered if she had really just seen a dragon—and set it free. She sat quietly in the back seat on the way home. Only when she looked out her window and saw, written in the sky, in blue and gold smoke, the words 'Thank you', did she realise it was real.



Comprehension

1. What covering did the dragon have on its body?
(a) hair
(b) scales
(c) feathers
2. The main idea of Paragraph 5 is:
(a) the dragon was sad.
(b) Zoe saw a dragon in a cage.
(c) the dragon was blue and gold.
3. What happened just after Zoe opened the cage?
(a) Blue and gold light lit the alley.
(b) Zoe saw 'Thank you' written in the sky.
(c) The dragon flew through the clouds.
4. What was Zoe's opinion of the Asian supermarket? She thought it was:
(a) an interesting place.
(b) a boring shop.
(c) weird and smelled strange.
5. Why did Zoe let the dragon out of the cage?
(a) She didn't think it was a dangerous dragon.
(b) She thought it was wrong to treat an animal badly.
(c) She was hoping the dragon would give her a reward.
6. Why was this text written?
(a) to entertain the reader
(b) to give information
(c) to scare the reader
7. Which of the following is a fact?
(a) Zoe is a name.
(b) Dragons are nice.
(c) Dragons like flying.
8. What does the word *this* (Paragraph 3) refer to?
(a) the alley
(b) the dragon
(c) the idea of going into the alley
9. What was the effect of Zoe opening the cage door?
(a) The dragon got out.
(b) Lights flashed in the alley.
(c) Zoe left the alley.
10. Next time Zoe sees a dark alley, what will she probably do?
(a) be too scared to go in it
(b) go in, very carefully
(c) see a dragon



All about words

1. Which word does not have the same final sound as *she*, *alley* and *quickly*?

- (a) *body*
- (b) *free*
- (c) *smoke*

2. Which word means *unable to speak due to a shock or strong emotion*?

- (a) *stunned*
- (b) *shocked*
- (c) *speechless*

3. Which word is a synonym (has the same meaning) for *weird* (Paragraph 2)?

- (a) *unusual*
- (b) *normal*
- (c) *wired*

4. What is a *sapphire* (Paragraph 5)?

- (a) *the lump of brown stuff that oozes from a tree trunk*
- (b) *a fire that can't be put out*
- (c) *a precious stone, usually bright blue in colour*

When Zoe said she'd *check it out* (Paragraph 3), she meant:

- (a) *she would borrow it from the library.*
- (b) *she would go and have a look to see what it was.*
- (c) *it was time for her to leave.*

6. Which homophone fits this sentence?

Setting the dragon free was the thing to do.

- (a) *write*
- (b) *right*
- (c) *rite*

7. What is another word for *warily* (Paragraph 5)?

- (a) *carefully*
- (b) *quietly*
- (c) *quickly*

8. Which words belong to the same group as the words *eye*, *chest* and *scales*?

- (a) *wings*
- (b) *crate*
- (c) *price*

9. Which words use the spelling rule of doubling the last consonant when adding *ed* (as in *stop-stopped*, *tap-tapped*)?

- (a) *smelled*, *watched*
- (b) *stunned*, *stepped*
- (c) *groaned*, *pleaded*

10. Which word is an antonym (the opposite) for *curious*?

- (a) *interesting*
- (b) *tired*
- (c) *uninterested*