



I searched around the plants and beanstalks, stepping among broken pots and bits of polytunnel. If dragons really had demolished Grim's garden, then where were they now?

In the end that question only bothered me for about twenty seconds because of the low-flying cucumber. As I said earlier, cucumbers and dragons are not the same at all. And one thing a cucumber *definitely* can't do is fly. Or so I thought. Except this one plummeted from the sky, almost knocking me out.



I looked up just in time to see two shapes spiralling upwards over Grim's greenhouse. One of them was clutching what I guessed was a bunch of carrots. Glittering sparks lit up the sky and fizzled out around them. Dragons!

Flicker spotted them and, leaving the half-chewed plant, he flew up into the air. In his excitement, his whole body pulsed with ever-changing colours and the sparks that shot out crackled around me. He rose higher and higher, and for a heart-stopping moment I thought he would follow the others, but a little way above the treetops he turned, and flickering orange and gold he came back to me. He settled on my shoulder and wrapped his tail around my neck and it felt like a buzz of electricity against my skin. We stayed there watching, until the two dragons were tiny specks and then disappeared altogether.

I was right! There were more dragons. But it was clear that after some initial damage they weren't staying long in the garden. Or even nearby. Not given the general absence of fires and chaos in the village.

But where did they go? Where exactly did dragons live?

Unfortunately it turned out that was a question that was going to bother me for a lot longer than twenty seconds, and no cucumber was going to drop the answer on my head either.

I kept looking, wondering if there were any more dragons hiding in Grim's garden. I tried to remember how many empty dragon-fruit skins I'd seen. I needed to check if there were other dragons who hadn't yet flown away. Maybe I could coax them into

Grandad's garden and prevent any more damage being done to Grim's vegetables.

I made my way over to his shed. Some material covering the window meant I couldn't see in, but I stared through the glass of the greenhouse at the tidy rows of pots, each one with a tiny shoot peeking out. They certainly interested Flicker, who flew straight into the glass several times, before giving up and landing in a disgruntled and slightly dazed heap on a nearby branch. They were probably Grim's pride and joy, so it was just as well the dragons hadn't managed to get in there.

And then a dreadful voice growled from the shadows: 'Oi! Get your snotty nose off my glass, you vandal!'

No prizes for guessing who that was.

I turned and saw Grim storming down the garden towards me, his black coat billowing out behind him.

I had to admit this didn't look good. Not good at all. Me tramping through his wrecked veggie patch to stand with my nose pressed up to his greenhouse. And I knew it, so the guilty look on my face can't have helped.



‘Just look at my plot!’ Grim snarled. ‘I knew you were trouble, soon as I clapped eyes on you.’ He looked around at the devastation. ‘My poor onions and aubergines,’ he moaned.

Excuses tumbled into my head. Any one of them would have done, but in my panic they all got mixed up so I ended up blurting out, ‘I saw a ... fox. A fox ... fly into your greenhouse with my football so I chased it away for you.’

Grim glared at me, his face turning beet-root red.

Suddenly something flew through the air and landed at Grim’s feet. We both stared at it, too surprised by the aerial attack to move. And no, it wasn’t a dragon. It was worse. Much worse. Seconds later the smell hit us, as the air filled with the toxic reek of rotten egg.

Stink bomb!

I ran, as more stink bombs soared around me and an angry Grim spluttered through the foul stink.

‘What are you playing at? You stay away, d’ya hear? I’ll be watching you!’

As I jumped the little fence I remembered the feeling of being watched and the noise of the hedge – it hadn't been the breeze. Or my imagination. I knew exactly what had caused it and who had thrown those stink bombs. Someone who had got stink bombs for Christmas. And it meant Grim wasn't the only one watching me.

'Stinker by name, stinker by nature,' I muttered as I ducked down behind the dragon-fruit tree. I waited till I was sure Grim had stomped off back to his house. There was no sound or sign of Liam either. But the faint smell of rotten eggs still lingered in the air. That and something else too.

I stood up, searching for the source of this new smell. It was making me dizzy with its heady scent. Then I saw something. The vivid tendrils on one of the long green cactus arms of the dragon-fruit tree had parted. Nestled inside were the white petals of a flower. In the moonlight it seemed to be glowing.

I remembered Grandad reading aloud from the book. How he had said that before the fruit there came a flower that bloomed for just one night. I looked around. Several more flowers were starting to open. And then I saw one amazing flower already in full bloom. The tendrils had spread into a star shape and the moon-white petals within had unfolded to reveal a golden heart. This flower was as big as my head. And I breathed

in the rich scent of it, picturing the fruit to come.



Suddenly I knew what I had to do. With Liam nosing around and goodness knows how many more dragons soon to be growing on the tree, I needed to get help. I needed my superhero squad with me.