

Dragon, Dragon

John Gardner

2 There was once a king whose kingdom was plagued by a dragon. The king did not know which way to turn. The king's knights were all cowards who hid under their beds whenever the dragon came in sight, so they were of no use to the king at all. And the king's wizard could not help either because, being old, he had forgotten his magic spells. Nor could the wizard look up the spells that had slipped his mind, for he had unfortunately misplaced his wizard's book many years before. The king was at his wit's end.

Every time there was a full moon the dragon came out of his lair and **ravaged** the countryside. He frightened maidens and stopped up chimneys and broke store windows and set people's clocks back and made dogs bark until no one could hear himself think.

He tipped over fences and robbed graves and put frogs in people's drinking water and tore the last chapters out of novels and changed house numbers around so that people crawled into bed with their neighbors.

He stole spark plugs out of people's cars and put firecrackers in people's cigars and stole the clappers from all the church bells and sprung every bear trap for miles around so the bears could wander wherever they pleased.

And to top it all off, he changed around all the roads in the kingdom so that people could not get anywhere except by starting out in the wrong direction.

Vocabulary Builder
ravaged (rəv' (d) v.
violently destroyed;
ruined

3 **Literary Analysis**
Character Based on his actions, what words would you use to describe the dragon?

4 **Reading Check**
What is the problem in the kingdom?

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1 Motivation

Prepare an **Anticipation Guide** (*General Resources*, pp. 8–10) with the following statements:

- Always follow your parents' advice.
- Arranged marriages never work.
- You can always find a way to defeat any opponent.

Give students a copy of the prepared Anticipation Guide and have students mark their responses in the Me column. Have students discuss the statements in pairs or groups and mark the Guides again in the Group column.

Concept Connector

Students will return to the Anticipation Guide after completing the story.

Learning Modalities

Visual/Spatial Learners

Have students take notes about the dragon in the story or make sketches of it as they read. When they have finished, ask students to either draw or write a description of the dragon based on what they have read about it.

2 About the Selection

The kingdom in John Gardner's story "Dragon, Dragon" is plagued by a dragon that outsmarts those sent to kill it. The kingdom's cobbler, who thinks he is the least important person in the land, is perhaps the smartest. His two eldest sons fail to slay the dragon because they refuse to take their father's advice. The younger son, He takes his father's advice and slays the dragon.

3 Literary Analysis

Character

- Remind students that writers often use a character's actions to reveal what the character is like.
- Read the bracketed passage together. **Ask** the Literary Analysis question.
Possible responses: The dragon is mean, destructive, wicked, and imaginative.

4 Reading Check

Answer: The kingdom is plagued by a dragon.

Differentiated Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

Support for Less Proficient Readers
To assist students' comprehension, have them read along with the audio CD version of the story. Stop the recording frequently, and have students discuss what has happened. Guide the discussion by asking them questions about characters, story events, and changes in setting.

Strategy for Advanced Readers
A humorous element of this story is that although dragons, kings, and wizards are associated with medieval times, the dragon wreaks havoc with modern things such as car batteries. Invite students to write an additional paragraph that addresses more ways the dragon plagues the kingdom. Ask them to describe ways that it interferes with advanced technology, such as computers and telecommunications.

Answers About Dragon Dragon John Gardner Test

SJ Ball



Answers About Dragon Dragon John Gardner Test:

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