



Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher

by Bruce Coville

Teacher's Guide

Written By Laurie Rozakis, Ph.D.

**CLASSROOM
FAVORITES**

A Perma-Bound Production

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Synopsis

Chapter 1

Twelve-year-old Jeremy Thatcher doesn't get along with his art teacher, the sardonic Mr. Kravitz, who constantly humiliates Jeremy for reasons the boy doesn't understand. When the novel opens, Mr. Kravitz has confiscated a note that Mary Lou Hutton sent to Jeremy, in which she declares her intention to kiss Jeremy after school. After school, Jeremy tells his best friend, Specimen, how unfair Mr. Kravitz is to him. Nonetheless, both Jeremy and Specimen are looking forward to the annual art contest, to be held soon. Also after school, Jeremy's classmates Freddy and Howard chase and tease him about Mary Lou's kissing plans. To escape, Jeremy runs through alleys and side streets and finds himself in a part of town he has never seen before. Jeremy enters a small magic shop run by the mysterious Mr. Elives, where he purchases a strange multi-colored egg for a quarter. It turns out to be a dragon egg!

Chapter 2

Jeremy reads the instructions that Mr. Elives has given him about hatching the dragon egg. Then Jeremy helps his father, a veterinarian, feed his patients, including an especially nasty cat named Fat Pete.

Chapter 3

At five minutes to midnight, Jeremy takes the egg outside and chants the poem he had memorized earlier. He returns inside and later that night, the egg begins to hatch—a dragon emerges! The dragon communicates with Jeremy via telepathy and they bond. Jeremy realizes that the dragon is a female.

Chapter 4

Jeremy returns to the hatching instructions and finds that they have changed by magic: now the page has instructions for feeding the baby dragon. Jeremy must save all the shell bits and the teeth and skin the dragon molts. The dragon will need these when Midsummer Night comes around. Jeremy feeds the baby dragon chicken livers. Jeremy then goes to the library for more information about the care and feeding of dragons. Miss Priest, a librarian, gives him a book on dragons. Jeremy has terrible hunger pains and realizes the dragon is communicating its hunger through him.

Chapter 5

The author of the dragon book is Mr. Elives! On the way home, Jeremy meets Mary Lou and learns that they have the same taste in literature. Back home, Jeremy is surprised that his mother can't see the dragon; it appears that only Jeremy can see it.

Chapter 6

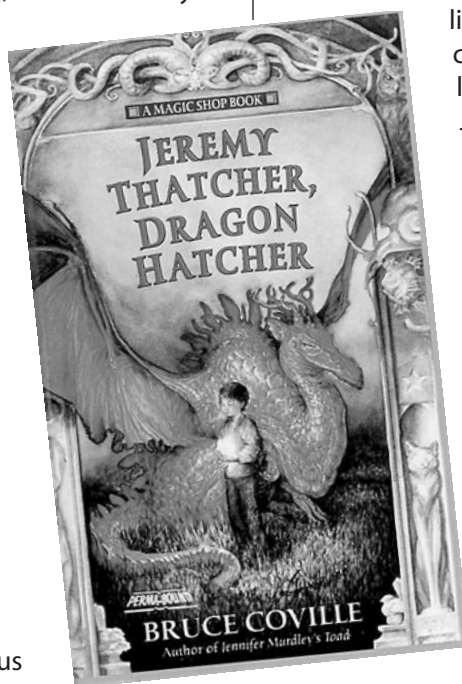
From the book, Jeremy learns that baby dragons like milk. His dragon certainly does! With the dragon's approval, Jeremy names the dragon Tiamat, a name from Babylonian mythology. Specimen comes into Jeremy's room and can't see the dragon.

Chapter 7

Jeremy and Specimen try to find the magic shop but cannot. Tiamat is growing very fast. Sitting in art class, Jeremy senses that something is wrong with Tiamat. He rushes home to discover that she has shed her skin.

Chapter 8

Jeremy is shocked to find Mary Lou at his bedroom door. Unlike everyone else, she can see Tiamat. She explains this simply, saying, "I love dragons." Mary Lou is in Jeremy's house because she and her family have been invited to dinner: Dr. Thatcher has a business proposition for them. Unfortunately, the dinner party is a total disaster because Tiamat chases the cats around and all the food ends up on the floor.



Chapter 9

The principal calls Jeremy in and kindly explains that if Jeremy can't cope with Mr. Kravitz's bullying, he should come to the principal's office rather than going home. The principal believes that Jeremy rushed home the previous day to escape from Mr. Kravitz's cruelty, not realizing that Jeremy was worried about Tiamat. The dragon escapes from the house and follows Jeremy to school. During a math test, she gives Mr. Kravitz a hot foot. As a result, Mr. Kravitz bans all the students in Room 19 from the annual art contest.

Chapter 10

Tiamat attacks Fat Pete, thinking the cat is harming Jeremy. Jeremy gets some ointment for the dragon from his father, and it appears that Dr. Thatcher can see Tiamat. He refuses to admit it, however. Mr. Elives writes Jeremy a letter, telling him that it will soon be time for the dragon to go home. Mr. Elives summons Jeremy and Tiamat to meet him at the corner of Main and Not Main at 11:30 on Midsummer Night. Jeremy reads the history of dragons and learns that they are hatched on earth but live in a realm safe from humans.

Chapter 11

Mary Lou has been helping Jeremy with Tiamat by supplying much of the milk the fast-growing dragon needs, and the kids have become good friends. Jeremy confesses to Mr. Kravitz that he is responsible for the hot foot. Mr. Kravitz doesn't believe him but lets everyone but Jeremy apply to the art contest. Jeremy asks Mr. Kravitz why the man does not like him. Although he doesn't get an answer, Jeremy realizes that Mr. Kravitz is jealous of Jeremy's artistic talent because Mr. Kravitz has little of his own.

Chapter 12

Jeremy and Tiamat fly high above the earth in glorious evenings. The dragon weeps that she must go home: her tear is a diamond. Mary Lou comes to say goodbye to Tiamat. On June 23, Midsummer Night, Jeremy takes Tiamat to the corner of Main and Not Main, struggling through thick, mysterious fog.

Chapter 13

Jeremy is shocked to discover Miss Priest at the magic shop. Together, they use the dragon's shell bits, baby teeth, and shed skin to construct a gate for Tiamat to use to pass into the next realm. Jeremy and Tiamat love each other so much that the dragon is unable to pass through the gate until Mr. Elives shouts to Jeremy to let her go. She passes through the gate and Jeremy dissolves in tears.

Epilogue

Jeremy is depressed and unable to create his art. His parents decide to have a Halloween party, and Miss Priest is one of the guests. She shows Jeremy her diamond, proof that she was a dragon hatcher as well. Tiamat comes back by communicating through Jeremy's mind, enabling Jeremy to experience Tiamat's world. Comforted, Jeremy is now able to return to his art.

Timeline Of Modern Events That Impact Fantasy Literature

- 1970 liquid crystal watches go on market
- 1971 CAT scan becomes available
- 1972 pocket calculator hits market
- 1973 car airbags introduced
- 1974 barcodes added on supermarket products
- 1975 home computers become available
- 1976 VHS and Betamax introduced
- 1977 first complete genetic structure of an organism found (Great Britain)
first flight of the Space Shuttle
first commercial flight of supersonic *Concorde* between New York, Paris, London
USA admits testing neutron bomb
Trans-Alaska Pipeline starts oil flowing from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez
- 1978 Louise Brown, first baby conceived through vitro fertilization, is born
- 1979 graphical user interface developed
- 1980 Sony Walkman introduced
- 1981 compact disks hit the market
- 1982 video keyhole surgery first accomplished
- 1983 synthetic human insulin approved for sale
- 1984 DNA fingerprinting introduced
- 1985 first dotcom registered
- 1986 laptop computer for sale to consumers
- 1987 Prozac hits the market
- 1988 first Internet virus attack; 10% of online computers disabled
- 1989 toaster becomes first appliance controlled over the Internet
- 1990 first gene therapy accomplished (4-year-old girl with an immune disorder)
- 1991 Internet browser developed (spawns World Wide Web)
- 1992 text messaging introduced
- 1993 Global Positioning Satellite introduced
- 1994 genetically modified tomatoes hit market

- 1995 *Toy Story*, the first entirely computer-generated feature film, is released
- 1996 The Hubble Ultra Deep Field photograph reveals some 10,000 galaxies at a distance between 2.5 billion and 10.5 billion light years from earth
- 1997 Dolly the sheep, first mammal cloned from an adult cell, is born
- 1998 first segment of the International Space Station launched
- 1999 electronic reusable paper invented
- 2000 Y2K panic sweeps the world
- 2001 implanted microchips give sight to three blind men
- 2002 iris (eye) scanners first used for airport security
cosmic background radiation revealed to be polarized
- 2003 China becomes the third country to put a human being in orbit
- 2004 Sedna, a large orbiting body, is discovered and revealed to be just one of many new planetoids
- 2005 NASA launches Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter
- 2006 Scientists decide that Pluto is not a true planet
Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter lands
- 2007 NASA's Dawn Mission to begin eight-year 3.2 billion-mile journey to the beginning of the solar system.

Author Sketch

Bruce Coville was born in 1950 in Syracuse, New York, and raised in Phoenix, a rural community in central New York. Coville recalled enjoying an idyllic childhood roaming the fields. Describing his hometown, Coville said: "It was a wonderful place for a child to grow up. In addition to the farm, there was a swamp behind the house, and a rambling wood beyond that, both of which were conducive to all kinds of imaginative games." His father was a sales engineer; his mother, an executive secretary.



Coville's father wasn't home much due to the demands of his job, but he made time to be with his son. Coville dates his interest in literature in general and fantasy in particular from a specific incident: his father reading him *Tom Swift in the City of Gold*. "It changed my life," Coville said. Describing the incident, Coville said: "One night after supper he took me into the living room, had me sit in his lap, and opened a thick...book and proceeded to open a whole new world for me. I was enthralled, listened raptly, waited anxiously for the next night and the next, resented any intrusion, and reread the book several times later on my own. It was the only

book I can ever remember him reading to me, but it changed my life. I was hooked on books." By the sixth grade, Coville had decided to become a writer himself.

There were, however, a number of detours on the road to literary success for Coville. He began his college education at Duke University, transferred to the State University of New York at Binghamton, and transferred yet again, finally receiving his BA in 1974 from the State University of New York at Oswego. After graduation, Coville took a position as a teacher in Liverpool, New York, staying for seven years. In addition, Coville worked as a camp counselor, grave digger, assembly line worker, and toymaker. He began writing with musical plays and short stories, not finding his niche until he published his first picture book in 1978. Illustrated by his wife, Katherine, that first tale for younger readers describes a mild, clumsy giant who has difficulty being accepted by the ordinary people of his village until he saves them from an evil wizard.

Some of Coville's most popular books involve Mr. Elives' Magic Shop, including *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*. Coville often uses wit and humor to appeal to his readers, evident in this series. In an interesting sideline, Coville has adapted many of Shakespeare's plays for younger readers, including *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Macbeth*.

In addition to being a highly successful commercial writer, Coville has promoted local theater and currently runs Full Cast Audio, a book recording company. In addition to being the owner, he also serves as producer and performer.

Coville remains determined to educate as well as entertain young people. He explains: "The first and foremost job in writing is to tell a whacking good story. You just have to hope it might mean something before you're done."

Critic's Corner

In 1977, Bruce Coville won a Knickerbocker Award from the New York State Library Association for his entire body of work. *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* was a Children's Choice Award Nominee in sixteen states and an IRA Teachers' Choice Book.

Reviews were positive. Kenneth E. Kowen, reviewing the novel for *School Library Journal*, called it an "entertaining fantasy...filled with scenes that will bring laughter and near tears to readers"; he praised Coville's storytelling: "Jeremy and his friends are believable characters whose actions and reactions are typical of the children's age," offering "a fantasy that younger readers can handle easily, and one in which dragons really exist for a little while." Kathleen Redmond wrote in the *Voice of Youth Advocates* that the novel is a good combination of real and fantasy worlds and "is right on target."

Other Books By Bruce Coville

Picture Books

The Foolish Giant (1978)
Sarah's Unicorn (1979)
Sarah and the Dragon (1984)
My Grandfather's House (1996)
The Prince of Butterflies (2000)

Juvenile Fiction

The Brave Little Toaster Storybook (1987)
Murder in Orbit (1987)
Monster of the Year (1989)
Goblins in the Castle (1992)
The Dragonslayers (1994)
Oddly Enough (1994)
The World's Worst Fairy Godmother (1996)
The Lapsnatcher (1997)
Odder Than Ever (1999)
The Monsters of Morley Manor (2001)
Odds Are Good: An Oddly Enough and Odder Than Ever Omnibus (2005)
Thor's Wedding Day (2005)

Young Adult Novels

Space Station ICE III (1985)
Fortune's Journey (1995)
(With Jane Yolen) *Armageddon Summer* (1998)
"Chamber of Horror" series
"A.I. Gang" series
"Camp Haunted Hills" series
"My Teacher" series
"Magic Shop" series
"Nina Tanleven" series
"Space Brat" series
"Alien Adventures" series
"Unicorn Chronicles" series
"I Was a Sixth Grade Alien" series
"Moongobble and Me" series

Compiler and Editor

The Unicorn Treasury by Tim Hildebrandt (1987)
Herds of Thunder, Manes of Gold: A Collection of Horse Stories and Poems by Ted Lewin (1991)
Bruce Coville's Book of Monsters (1993)
Bruce Coville's Book of Aliens (1994)
Bruce Coville's Book of Ghosts by John Pierard (1994)
Bruce Coville's Book of Nightmares (1995)
Bruce Coville's Book of Spine Tinglers (1996)
Bruce Coville's Book of Magic (1996)
Bruce Coville's Book of Monsters II by John Pierard (1996)
Bruce Coville's Book of Aliens II (1996)
Bruce Coville's Book of Ghosts II by John Pierard (1997)
Bruce Coville's Book of Nightmares II by John Pierard (1997)
Bruce Coville's Book of Spine Tinglers II (1997)
Bruce Coville's Book of Magic II (1997)
A Glory of Unicorns by Alix Berenzy (1998)
Bruce Coville's Strange Worlds (2000)
Bruce Coville's UFOs (2000)
Half-Human by Marc Tauss (2001)

Reteller; Picture Books

William Shakespeare's The Tempest (1993)
William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream (1996)
William Shakespeare's Macbeth by Gary Kelley (1997)
William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night (2003)
William Shakespeare's Hamlet by Leonid Gore (2004)

Other

Author of book and lyrics, *The Dragon Slayers* (first produced at Syracuse Musical Theater, 1981)
Author of book and lyrics, *Out of the Blue* (first produced at Syracuse Musical Theater, 1982)
Author of book and lyrics with Barbara Russell,
It's Midnight: Do You Know Where Your Toys Are? (first produced at Syracuse Musical Theater, 1983)

Bibliography

Periodicals

Booklist, March 15, 1994, Karen Harris, review of *The Ghost Wore Gray*, p. 1385; October 1, 1994, Chris Sherman, review of *Into the Land of the Unicorns*, p. 325; December 1, 1994, Mary Harris Veeder, review of *The Dragonslayers*, p. 680; October 15, 1995, Susan Dove Lempke, review of *Fortune's Journey*, p. 401; November 1, 1995, Ellen Mandel, review of *Planet of the Dips*, p. 473; March 15, 1996, Barbara Baskin, review of *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*, p. 1306; November 1, 1997, Hazel Rochman, review of *William Shakespeare's Macbeth*, p. 464; August 1998, Roger Leslie, review of *Armageddon Summer*, p. 272; December 1, 1999, Michael Cart, review of *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*, p. 700; December 15, 2001, Frances Bradburn, review of *Half-Human*, p. 723; April 15, 2003, Candace Smith, "The *Booklist* Interview: Bruce Coville," p. 1485; January 1, 2004, Louise Brueggemann, review of *Juliet Dove, Queen of Love*, p. 854.

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, February 1990, review of *Herds of Thunder, Manes of Gold*, p. 133; July 1992, review of *Jennifer Murdley's Toad*, p. 292; July 1996, review of *William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 385; January 1998, review of *William Shakespeare's Macbeth*, p. 117.

Horn Book, March–April, 1990, Elizabeth S. Watson, review of *Herds of Thunder, Manes of Gold*, p. 200; September 1996, review of *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*, p. 566;

Kirkus Reviews, August 1, 2005, review of *Thor's Wedding*, p. 846.

Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, March 2002, Michelle West, review of *The Monsters of Morley Manor*, p. 34.

New York Times Book Review, October 31, 1982, Anne Jordan, review of *The Monster's Ring*, p. 27; October 23, 1994, Francine Prose, review of *Oddly Enough*, p. 30; April 23, 1995, Maxine Kumin, review of *William Shakespeare's The Tempest*, p. 27; July 28, 1996, Judith Viorst, review of *My Grandfather's House*, p. 21; December 19, 1999, review of *Song of the Wanderer*, p. 30.

Publishers Weekly, July 5, 1986, Diane Roback, review of *Operation, Sherlock*, p. 193; January 19, 1990, review of *The Foolish Giant*, p. 112; August 2, 1991, review of *The Unicorn Treasury*, p. 74; April 20, 1992, review of *Jennifer Murdley's Toad*, p. 57; July 27, 1992, review of *Space Brat*, p. 63; November 8, 1993, review of *Aliens Ate My Homework*, p. 77; August 22, 1994, review of *Into the Land of the Unicorns*, p. 56; August 21, 1995, review of *Fortune's Journey*, p. 66; August 11, 1997, review of *The Skull of Truth*, p. 402; May 10, 1999, review of *Odder Than Ever*, p. 69; November 15, 1999, review of *Into the Land of the Unicorns*, p. 69; March 18, 2002, review of *The Prince of Butterflies*, p. 104.

School Library Journal, September 1988, Carolyn Caywood, review of *The Ghost Wore Gray*, p. 183; May 1991, Kenneth E. Kowen, review of *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*, p. 91; September 1992, Margaret C. Howell, review of *Jennifer Murdley's Toad*, p. 250; December 1994, Patricia A. Dolisch, review of *Oddly Enough*, p. 106; December 1995, Anne Connor, review of *Planet of the Dips*,

p. 79; December 2001, Janet Hilburn, review of *Half-Human*, p. 133; May 2002, Kathie Meizner, review of *The Prince of Butterflies*, p. 111; December 2003, B. Allison Gray, review of *Juliet Dove, Queen of Love*, p. 148; February 2004, Nancy Menaldi-Scanlan, review of *William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night*, p. 8.

Teacher Librarian, February 2005, Graceanne DeCandido, review of *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*, p. 31.

Voice of Youth Advocates, June 1991 Kathleen Redmond, review of *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*, p. 106.

Internet

"The Online Photographer: T.O.P. Ten: Number 1"
http://www.theonlinephotographer.blogspot.com/2006/06/top-ten-number-1_06.html

General Objectives

1. To understand how Jeremy finds the magic shop
2. To realize that Miss Priest has also been a dragon hatcher
3. To appreciate Jeremy's significant artistic talent
4. To understand Mr. Kravitz's cruelty
5. To compare and contrast Jeremy and Specimen
6. To trace Jeremy's growing relationship with Mary Lou
7. To analyze the symbolism in the novel
8. To recognize the novel's theme
9. To describe the novel's plot
10. To understand the novel's ending

Specific Objectives

1. To appreciate why the dragon chooses Jeremy to be her hatcher
2. To trace the steps in hatching a dragon
3. To analyze how Jeremy and Tiamat communicate
4. To understand that dragons are completely mythical creatures
5. To appreciate Jeremy's ability to follow directions and his love for his dragon
6. To probe why Mr. Kravitz is jealous of Jeremy
7. To parallel Jeremy's talent as an artist to Coville's talent as a writer and to determine whether Jeremy is a stand-in for the author himself
8. To determine who can see Tiamat and why
9. To understand the symbolism of color in the novel and how it represents artistic ability
10. To determine what Jeremy learns from this experience and how he changes as a result of it

Literary Terms And Applications

For a better understanding of Bruce Coville's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

Fantasy: is a kind of writing that describes events that could not take place in real life. Fantasy has unrealistic characters, settings, and events. *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* is a fantasy because the entire premise is make-believe: dragons are not real and have never been real, so Jeremy could not possibly hatch one. In addition, a shop cannot appear and disappear, as the magic shop does; a fog cannot suddenly spring up to create the suitably mysterious mood.

Humor: parts of a story that are funny. The chief comic character in *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* is Jeremy's father, an easy-going, witty veterinarian. For example, on p. 83, Dr. Thatcher dives for one of the cats during the dinner party, misses, and lands face first in the mashed potatoes, creating a very amusing visual. In another scene, Dr. Thatcher balks at cutting the rhubarb as his wife wants because he claims to be busy. "Doing what?" his wife asks. "Bothering Jeremy," he replies. (p. 79)

Description: a word picture of what something or someone is like. Description is made up of sensory details that help readers form pictures in their minds. In *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*, Coville uses description to help readers visualize the people, places, and action. An excerpt from p. 24 is typical: "The high, frantic chorus of the spring peepers almost covered the sound of the wind as it moved through the newly opened willow leaves." This description appeals to the sense of sound as well as touch and sight.

The Importance Of Setting

Science fiction is fantasy writing that tells about make-believe events that include science or technology. Often, science fiction is set in the future, on distant planets, or among alien races. *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* is set in the make-believe town of Blodgett's Crossing. The town is realistic, which serves to heighten the make-believe elements. The dragon, the mysterious Miss Priest and Mr. Elives, and the shifting location of the magic shop all seem more fantastical because they are set against a realistic backdrop.

Cross-Curricular Sources

Fiction

Richard Adams, *Watership Down*
Peter S. Beagle, *The Last Unicorn*
Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*
Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible*
Ursula K. Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea*
C. S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia*
Patricia A. McKillip, *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld*
Michael Moorcock, *Elric of Melniboné*
James Morrow, *Towing Jehovah*
Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*
Philip Pullman, *The Golden Compass*
J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*
J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*
Louis Sachar, *Holes*
Mary Stewart, *Merlin Trilogy*
J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*
Vernor Vinge, *A Deepness in the Sky*
T. H. White; *The Once and Future King*
Connie Willis, *To Say Nothing of the Dog*
Roger Zelazny, *The Great Book of Amber: The Complete Amber Chronicles*, 1-10

Nonfiction

John Clute, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*
Vincent Di Fate, *Infinite Worlds: The Fantastic Visions of Science Fiction*
Frank M. Robinson, *Science Fiction of the 20th Century: An Illustrated History*
Robert Silverberg, *Reflections and Refractions: Thoughts on Science-Fiction, Science, and Other Matters*

Audiocassettes

The Monster's Ring (1992)
The Ghost Wore Gray (1993)
Jennifer Murdley's Toad (1996)
Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher (1996)
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The Skull of Truth (1998)
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www.brucecoville.com/

Kidsreads.com - Bruce Coville

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Bruce Coville

www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/c/bruce-coville/

Juvenile Books Author of the Month: Bruce Coville

www.yourlibrary.ws/childrens_webpage/j-author52001.htm

Kids@Random: Bruce Coville

www.randomhouse.com/kids/catalog/author.pperl?authorid=5856

The My Hero Project - Bruce Coville

www.myhero.com/hero.asp?hero=bcoville

YRCA Sample Book Ideas -- Jeremy Thatcher

www.ucalgary.com/~dkbrown/yrca_coville.html

Good Conversations! A Talk with Bruce Coville

www.goodconversations.com/authors/coville.html

Bruce Coville - Wikipedia

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Coville

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Bruce Coville's *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* should include these aspects:

Themes

- animals
- art
- bravery
- dragons
- eggs
- friendship
- girls and first romances
- mind reading
- mystery
- unfair teachers

Motifs

- being an extremely talented artist
- growing up around many animals
- finding a strange egg in a magic shop
- hatching a dragon
- being one of the few people who can see the dragon
- learning to communicate with a dragon
- forging your first friendship with a member of the opposite sex
- being in a world of fantasy and science fiction
- giving up something you love very much
- dealing with a cruel, unfair teacher

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. And next to the rings, resting on a kind of pedestal, was a shining, multicolored ball, almost the size of his fist. A thousand different hues seemed to shimmer across its glistening surface. (Chapter 1, p. 9)
(Jeremy spots the dragon egg in a mysterious magic shop. This is the inciting incident in the novel. He is attracted to the egg's colors and odd shimmer. He has never seen anything like it before—and with good cause, because the dragon egg is unique.)
2. The old man looked directly into Jeremy's eyes. "You don't," he said softly. "It wants you." (Chapter 1, p. 11)
(The unhatched dragon is attracted to Jeremy's artistic ability and strength of character. Coville weaves in a great deal of mythology and dragon lore to make his fantasy seem believable. Here, readers are led to believe that dragons choose their hatchers.)
3. But with its plated chest and winged shoulders, the creature that now emerged from the shell could only be one thing. It could only be a dragon. (Chapter 3, p. 27)
(Even though the novel's clear-cut title makes it plain that a dragon is going to hatch, it is still shocking when one does. This scene is charming because the dragon is adorable and very winsome.)
4. "No sense in getting mad at a cat for being a cat," said Jeremy. (Chapter 8, p. 81)
(This is one of Dr. Thatcher's favorite sayings and Jeremy has made it his own. By this he means that a cat cannot help but act the way it does because it is a cat. By extension, a dragon cannot change its nature, either—no creature can. As a result, Jeremy does not get angry at Tiamat for making fire and giving Mr. Kravitz a hot foot. Fire is in a dragon's nature.)

5. This was the beginning of the Company of Hatchers. (Chapter 10, p. 109)
(In this scene, readers learn the mythology of dragon hatching. According to Coville, dragons cannot live with humans because humans pose too great a threat to them. As a result, dragons have moved to another world. Even though dragons flourish there, their eggs cannot hatch: that takes place only on earth. To deal with this issue, a handful of eggs are sent to earth each decade to be hatched, and then the dragons return to their own world. Jeremy has entered the Company of Hatchers. It is our first confirmation that Tiamat cannot stay on earth; she must return to her own world.)
6. "I think you are the most talented student I have ever taught," he said slowly. "Talented, but undisciplined." (Chapter 11, p. 118)
(Mr. Kravitz tells Jeremy this to answer Jeremy's question about whether or not the man likes him. Since Jeremy is very disciplined, readers can infer that Mr. Kravitz is jealous of the boy's talent because he has little of his own. This explains why Mr. Kravitz makes Jeremy's life miserable.)
7. *I liked the colors in your head. I knew we could share beautiful pictures.* (Chapter 12, p. 127)
(Tiamat sends this message to Jeremy to explain why she chose him to be her hatcher. As an artist, Jeremy is set above the rest of humanity: he is special. This is an important part of Coville's message in the book.)
8. "Because I love her. I don't want to lose her." (Chapter 13, p. 138)
Miss Priest has asked Jeremy why he wants Tiamat to stay on earth. This is the answer he gives. She replies: "You silly boy. Nothing you love is lost. Not really." This is Coville's theme in the novel: people and things you love leave their mark on you forever. "The only things you ever really have are the ones you hold inside your heart," in the word of Miss Priest.)
9. "I love you, Tiamat," whispered Jeremy. (Chapter 13, p. 140)
(As Tiamat is getting ready to return to her own land, Jeremy makes his declaration of love. We understand that the dragon is much more than a pet: she will be a part of the boy forever.)

10. The world of dragons. Tiamat's world. And now, suddenly, his world, too. (Epilogue, p. 148)
(Jeremy falls into a depression after Tiamat returns to her own world. He loses interest in everything—even in his art. At Halloween, Tiamat contacts him through telepathy and Jeremy realizes that they will never really be apart. Now he is able to return to his art.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. What does Jeremy buy in the magic shop?
(He buys a dragon egg.)
2. How much does he pay for this object?
(He pays a quarter.)
3. Why does Mr. Elives sell Jeremy the object?
(The egg has chosen Jeremy to be her hatcher.)
4. What trick does Tiamat play on Mr. Kravitz in school?
(Tiamat gives Mr. Kravitz a hot foot.)
5. Where does Tiamat go at the end of the novel?
(She returns to the land of magic and dragons where she will be safe from men with swords.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. Why does Tiamat choose Jeremy?
(It appears that Tiamat chooses Jeremy because of his artistic talent. This enables him to see her and to communicate with her via mental telepathy. Also, Jeremy believes in dragons, a necessary component in raising one.)
7. What do colors symbolize in the novel?
(They represent artistic talent and an ability to appreciate the world in all its glory. People who can appreciate colors are open to new things; they are the creative ones, the artists.)
8. Why does Mr. Kravitz treat all his students cruelly, but especially Jeremy?
(Mr. Kravitz is cruel because he realizes that he lacks talent. This makes him sour and bitter toward everyone around him. He picks on Jeremy especially because Jeremy has real artistic talent: indeed, Mr. Kravitz says that Jeremy is the most talented student he has ever had.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. What parts of the novel did you find especially humorous? In what ways?
(Students are likely to say that the scenes with Jeremy's father are very funny because they involve sight gags as well as verbal wit. Mr. Thatcher lands in the food at the dinner party while trying to catch the cats; he makes many silly jokes in a relaxed manner.)
10. Did you find the relationship between Jeremy and Tiamat realistic? Why or why not?
(The relationship is realistic because Coville parallels Mary Lou to Tiamat. Both are females and both represent Jeremy's first brush with love. Both the dragon and Mary Lou are portrayed as kind and sympathetic characters, which makes the relationships seem logical.)

Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. Explain how you would deal with a dragon hatching in your bedroom.
12. Working with a partner, role-play a dialogue between Jeremy and his father in which Jeremy tries to explain what happened with Tiamat.

Across The Curriculum

Language Arts

1. *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* is the sequel to Coville's novel *The Monster's Ring*. Read that novel and compare and contrast it to *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*.
2. Writing as Tiamat the dragon, explain why you chose Jeremy as your hatcher.
3. Give the dragon a different name and explain its significance.
4. Jeremy reads the instructions that Mr. Elives has given him about hatching the dragon egg. Write directions for another process, such as studying for a test or preparing a special dish.
5. Jeremy uses an almanac to discover the day of the next full moon. Skim an almanac and list at least ten facts you learned from it.

Drama

1. Jeremy's father has many animals at their home. Choose one of the animals and demonstrate how to take care of it.
2. Working with some classmates, debate the existence of dragons. Are they real or not? Were they ever real?

3. Improvise a scene in which Jeremy gets another dragon egg to hatch. What does he do this time?
4. In a roundtable discussion, brainstorm different ways that Jeremy can deal with his jealous art teacher, Mr. Kravitz.
5. With some classmates, perform a brief skit to show Jeremy learning more about dragons from Miss Priest and Mr. Elives.
6. Imagine that you are Mary Lou. Give a speech in which you explain your feelings for Jeremy.

Art / Music

1. Draw a picture of a dragon. Use the descriptions in the novel to spark your creativity.
2. Choose background music for an especially dramatic scene. Read the scene to a group of classmates as you play the music in the background.
3. Jeremy's mother won't come into his room since she stepped into some papier-mâché that he was making. Using a flour-and-water paste and strips of newsprint, make a papier-mâché model of a dragon. When it is dry, paint it to look like Tiamat.
4. Design your entry for the annual art contest described in the novel.
5. Create a new cover for the novel. Be sure that your cover captures the novel's themes.
6. Write a song about the events in this novel. Your song can be any form you wish, such as a ballad or rap song.

Geography and History

1. Jeremy is chosen to be a dragon hatcher. Once the dragon reaches a certain age and size, it must return to its own land. Some people raise helper dogs until they are around 18 months old, at which time they enter the Canine Companions for Independence program. Report on this program. See how it parallels what you read in *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*.
2. Dragons are mythical creatures. Find at least one other mythical creature and compare and contrast it to dragons.
3. Tiamat's name comes from Babylonian mythology. Report on the history of the ancient Babylonian civilization. Why do you think Coville chose this civilization as the origin of Tiamat's name?

4. Report on the history of dragons. Show your findings on a bulletin board, in a Power-point presentation, or on a web page.

Science

1. In the novel, the moon is imbued with magical powers. Explain some of the truths and myths about the moon.
2. Jeremy's father is a veterinarian. Find out what education is needed for this career.
3. Jeremy thinks the egg looks like a kaleidoscope. Make a kaleidoscope of your own from a paper towel tube and colored paper. Describe how it works.
4. Jeremy's room is cluttered with soiled laundry. Do your own laundry for a week. Explain to your classmates how to wash their own clothes.
5. Chart the phases of the moon for one month. Show your results on a chart.
6. Dragons weep diamonds, according to the novel. Research diamonds to find out how they are formed, cut, and assessed. What makes diamonds so valuable?
7. A mysterious fog springs up when Jeremy is trying to reach the corner of Main and Not Main. Explain how fog forms. If possible, design a demonstration to show how fog forms. Share your demonstration with the class.

Math

1. Jeremy is the shortest boy in his grade. Make a growth chart showing the range of heights for boys and girls in the 6th grade.
2. Calculate how much Tiamat's milk costs for a week, a month, and a year, assuming that she is drinking two gallons a day.
3. Jeremy has to save all of Tiamat's baby teeth. How many teeth do humans have? Make a calendar or other visual display showing when humans usually get and lose their baby teeth.

Alternate Assessment

1. Jeremy recites a specific poem to help the egg hatch. Write a new poem that will serve the same purpose.
2. Take Jeremy and Mary Lou ten years into the future and describe what their lives are like. Are they still close friends, for instance?
3. Improvise a dialogue between Jeremy and Mary Lou in which they figure out why they are the only two humans who can see the dragon. Also decide if Dr. Thatcher can see the dragon or not.
4. Draw or paint a mural showing the main events in the plot.
5. Write a critical review of the novel for publication in the school newspaper.

Vocabulary Test

Match each word in the left column from *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* to its definition in the right column. Write the letter of each correct answer in the corresponding space.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| ___ 1. chaos | a. decay |
| ___ 2. smug | b. asleep |
| ___ 3. tendril | c. carve |
| ___ 4. awe | d. turmoil, anarchy |
| ___ 5. etch | e. round object |
| ___ 6. vulnerable | f. red |
| ___ 7. agitation | g. trick |
| ___ 8. sphere | h. vine, shoot |
| ___ 9. lyric | i. inheritor |
| ___ 10. trivial | j. unprotected |
| ___ 11. hoax | k. ten years |
| ___ 12. salve | l. wonder |
| ___ 13. distress | m. insignificant |
| ___ 14. revulsion | n. frenzy |
| ___ 15. crimson | o. grief, torment |
| ___ 16. dormant | p. danger |
| ___ 17. peril | q. song |
| ___ 18. decade | r. complacent |
| ___ 19. blight | s. ointment |
| ___ 20. successor | t. disgust |

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blanks provided.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| A. Jeremy Thatcher | F. Spess |
| B. Mary Lou | G. Mr. Sigel |
| C. Grief | H. Mr. Kravitz |
| D. Herbert | I. Mr. Martinez |
| E. Miss Hyacinth Priest | J. Tiamat |

- ___ 1. the dragon
- ___ 2. Jeremy's father
- ___ 3. Jeremy's best friend, also an artist
- ___ 4. the boy who is the most talented artist in the school
- ___ 5. Jeremy's mean, sardonic art teacher
- ___ 6. the girl who can see the dragon
- ___ 7. Jeremy's homeroom teacher
- ___ 8. school principal
- ___ 9. Jeremy's Golden Retriever
- ___ 10. librarian

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- ___ 1. Mr. Kravitz has confiscated a note that Mary Lou Hutton has sent to Jeremy, in which she declares her intention to kiss Jeremy after school.
- ___ 2. Jeremy goes into the magic shop on a regular basis because he is an amateur magician.
- ___ 3. At the magic shop, Jeremy purchases a strange multi-colored egg for ten dollars.
- ___ 4. Jeremy reads the instructions that Mr. Elives has given him about hatching the dragon egg, which includes holding the egg outside under the full moon.
- ___ 5. Jeremy must save all the shell bits and the baby teeth and skin the dragon molts
- ___ 6. In addition to milk, the dragon eats a lot of gerbils.
- ___ 7. Unlike everyone else, Jeremy's mother can see Tiamat.
- ___ 8. Miss Priest has a ring with a diamond in it just like the diamond that Jeremy has.
- ___ 9. The dragon escapes from the house and follows Jeremy to school. During a math test, the dragon gives Mr. Kravitz a hot foot.
- ___ 10. Tiamat goes back to her own land on All Hallow's Eve, October 31st.

Comprehension Test A (page 2)

Part III: Quote Identification (30 points)

Briefly explain why each quote is important in the novel.

1. And next to the rings, resting on a kind of pedestal, was a shining, multicolored ball, almost the size of his fist. A thousand different hues seemed to shimmer across its glistening surface. (p.9)
2. Earth had too many heroes, too many swords—and not enough magic. (p.108)
3. Before he realized what he was doing, he said, “Mr. Kravitz, why do you hate me?” (p. 117)
4. “You silly boy. Nothing you love is lost. Not really.” (p. 138)
5. The next morning, Jeremy went to his desk. Humming contentedly, he arranged his pencils in front of him. Then he took out some paper—and began to draw. (p. 148)

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain who can see the dragon and who can't and what this ability suggests about the character.
2. Compare and contrast Jeremy and Spess. Show how they are the same and different.
3. Analyze why Tiamat chooses Jeremy to be her hatcher. What qualities made Jeremy ideal for the job?
4. What function does Mary Lou serve in the novel? Explain.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Choose the word or phrase that best completes each of the following statements.

1. Mr. Kravitz intercepts a note in which Mary Lou declares her intention to **(kiss, punch)** Jeremy.
2. In a **(toy store, magic shop)**, Jeremy purchases a strange multi-colored egg.
3. He pays a **(quarter, dollar)** for the egg.
4. Jeremy reads the instructions that Mr. Elives has given him about hatching the dragon egg, which includes holding the egg outside under the full **(sun, moon)**.
5. Jeremy must save all the **(feathers, shell bits)** and the baby teeth and skin the dragon molts.
6. In addition to milk, the dragon eats a lot of **(gerbils, chicken livers)**.
7. Jeremy learns that dragons cry **(blood, diamonds)**.
8. The dragon has to go home on **(Halloween, Midsummer Night)**.
9. The dragon escapes from the house and follows Jeremy to school. During a math test, she gives Mr. Kravitz a hot **(foot, seat)**.
10. Tiamat communicates with Jeremy by **(words, telepathy)**.

Part II: Matching (30 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blanks provided.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Freddy and Howard | A. the mysterious librarian |
| ___ 2. Mr. and Mrs. Hutton | B. buys a lot of milk for Tiamat |
| ___ 3. Fat Pete | C. guests at the Thatchers' dinner party |
| ___ 4. Miss Priest | D. a very talented 12-year-old artist |
| ___ 5. Jeremy Thatcher | E. the school principal |
| ___ 6. Mary Lou | F. a nasty cat |
| ___ 7. Tiamat | G. a female dragon |
| ___ 8. Specimen | H. Jeremy's Golden Retriever |
| ___ 9. Grief | I. Jeremy's fellow artist, nicknamed Spess |
| ___ 10. Mr. Martinez | J. Jeremy's classmates who try to bully him |

Part III: Identification (20 points)

Explain why each is important in the story.

1. the name Tiamat
2. milk
3. gerbils
4. colors
5. dragons

Comprehension Test B (page 2)

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain the origin and symbolism of the dragon's name.
2. Trace the novel's plot. Include the rising action, climax, and resolution.
3. Jeremy did not want to let the dragon return to its own time. Argue that Jeremy should or should not have kept Tiamat.
4. Describe what you learned about dragons from this novel. Describe at least three details.

Answer Key

Vocabulary

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. J | 11. G | 16. B |
| 2. R | 7. N | 12. S | 17. P |
| 3. H | 8. E | 13. O | 18. K |
| 4. L | 9. Q | 14. T | 19. A |
| 5. C | 10. M | 15. F | 20. I |

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. J | 6. B |
| 2. D | 7. G |
| 3. F | 8. I |
| 4. A | 9. C |
| 5. H | 10. E |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part III: Quote Identification (30 points)

- Jeremy spots the dragon egg in a mysterious magic shop. This is the inciting incident in the novel. He is attracted to the colors and odd shimmer. He has never seen anything like it before—and with good cause, because the dragon egg is unique.
- In this scene, readers learn the mythology of dragon hatching. According to Coville, dragons cannot live with humans because humans pose too great a threat to them. As a result, dragons moved to another world. Even though dragons flourish in their new world, their eggs can hatch only on earth. To deal with this issue, a handful of eggs are sent to earth each decade to be hatched and then the dragons return to their own world. Jeremy has entered the Company of Hatchers. This scene is our first confirmation that Tiamat cannot stay on earth; she must return to her own world.
- Readers can infer that Mr. Kravitz is jealous of the boy's talent because he has little of his own. This explains why Mr. Kravitz makes Jeremy's life miserable.
- This is Coville's theme in the novel: people and things you love leave their mark on you forever. The only things we ever really have are the things we hold inside our hearts.
- Jeremy falls into a depression after Tiamat returns to her own world. He loses interest in everything—even in his art. At Halloween, Tiamat contacts him through telepathy and Jeremy realizes that they will never really be apart. Now he is able to return to his art.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. kiss | 6. chicken livers |
| 2. magic shop | 7. diamonds |
| 3. quarter | 8. Midsummer Night |
| 4. moon | 9. foot |
| 5. shell bits | 10. telepathy |

Part II: Matching (30 points)

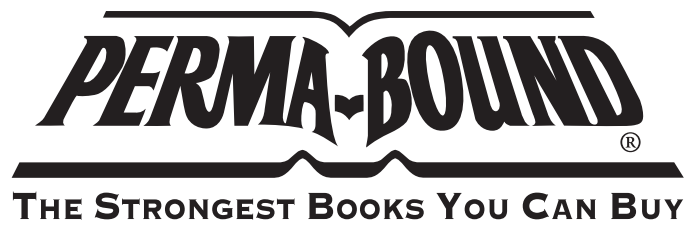
- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. J | 6. B |
| 2. C | 7. G |
| 3. F | 8. I |
| 4. A | 9. H |
| 5. D | 10. E |

Part III: Identification (20 points)

1. The name "Tiamat" comes from Babylonian mythology. Tiamat was the mother dragon that created the world. Mr. Elives takes this as a sign of Tiamat's vanity.
2. The baby dragon is a voracious eater. Jeremy finds that she adores milk and milk sates her appetite. Further, milk calms the dragon down, so she can sit quietly.
3. Jeremy and his father have many gerbils, which Tiamat would love to eat. She does not.
4. As an artist, Jeremy is very sensitive to colors. Tiamat chose him as her hatcher in part because of this. In the novel, colors symbolize kindness, sensitivity, and a higher sensibility than the average person possesses.
5. The novel revolves around dragons and their mythology and legends. Dragons are Coville's specialty. The popularity of this book attests to his skill and talent with this topic.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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