

## **Your Shortcut to... Dragons**

They've been feared in stories from every corner of the globe. They've appeared on flags, in festivals, and even on coins. And they're making a big comeback on the big screen, thanks to Hiccup and Toothless. This is your Squiz Kids Shortcut to dragons — the podcast where we dive into the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the big news stories. I'm Christie Kijurina.

And I'm Bryce Corbett.

Hey Bryce, would you ever want a dragon as a pet? Imagine skipping the morning traffic by riding your own Toothless to work!

Ha! That'd be epic... but I'd rather not end up as a crispy snack! I get why people are so into them though. With Hiccup, Toothless and the new How to Train Your Dragon movie hitting cinemas, dragons are definitely back in the spotlight.

They sure are!

Today, we'll take you through where dragons come from, who they are in legends, and why they continue to breathe fire into our imaginations. So grab your sword... or maybe just a notepad, and let's get started!

Listen carefully. There's a S'Quiz at the end.

### **WHERE**

So, where did dragons come from? Well, no one has ever actually discovered a real dragon, not even in the deepest, darkest corners of the planet. But that hasn't stopped humans from dreaming them up.

Wait ... no real dragons? Not even one tiny one?

Sorry Bryce, unless you count the Komodo dragon, which is actually a huge lizard found in Indonesia. It's big and scary, but no wings or fire-breathing.

That's a bummer , I was hoping for a tiny flame-thrower.

Ha! Well, one of the main reasons people started telling stories about dragons is because they came across giant bones, like dinosaur fossils, sticking out of cliffs or buried in the ground. Before people knew about dinosaurs, they thought these belonged to massive, fearsome beasts, dragons! Ancient Roman scholar Pliny the Elder even chimed in noting that a dragon could strangle an elephant with its tail.

Ah, Pliny! It kinda makes sense though. People saw a huge fossil and thought, "Yikes! A dragon skeleton!"

Exactly! And it wasn't just one place. In ancient China, there are lots of mentions of dragon bones in ancient texts. People thought they were the remains of long, snake-like dragons.

And in Europe, people imagined fire-breathing monsters that lived in caves. It's pretty amazing how different cultures all came up with similar creatures, scaly, fierce, and sometimes with wings... even though they were thousands of kilometres apart. It's like humans everywhere wanted to explain the unexplainable, and dragons fit the bill. But what about the dragons in stories? Who exactly are they?

WHO

Bryce, dragons show up in so many myths and legends around the world, and they're not always the same. In Europe, there's the famous story of St. George's dragon, a giant, fire-breathing beast that supposedly terrorised villages until a brave knight saved the day.

The classic knight-in-shining-armour versus dragon, I've seen that on so many movie posters!

Exactly. And in China, dragons are actually celebrated.

Oh, yeah! We see them in colourful New Year parades, dancing through the streets. Aren't they considered wise and lucky?

Yes! Chinese emperors even called themselves "Dragons" because they believed it made them powerful.

I'd love to be called "The Bryce Dragon." Sounds pretty cool.

Very regal! Then there's Fafnir from Norse myths, he was a dwarf who got so greedy he turned into a dragon to guard his treasure. Talk about taking your savings account a bit too seriously!

And in Japan, dragons are often water spirits that live in rivers and lakes. They're usually helpful, controlling rain and protecting people from floods. Some legends even say they can transform into humans.

That's right. And in modern times, we've got Smaug from The Hobbit, who hoarded his gold under a mountain, Dragon from Shrek, who swallowed Lord Farquaad whole, and of course, Toothless from How to Train Your Dragon, who's become everyone's favourite dragon buddy. Dragons might have started as scary beasts, but over time they've turned into some of our most beloved characters.

So from fire-breathing villains to cute, trainable friends... dragons sure get around! But, Christie, why do humans love them so much?

WHY

Why are we fascinated by dragons? That's the million-dollar question, Bryce. Some experts think dragons represent our biggest fears... the unknown, the unstoppable, the unbeatable. They're the ultimate challenge for heroes in stories.

Kind of like the final boss in a video game!

Exactly! But dragons also let us dream of magic and adventure. Who wouldn't want to have a scaly sidekick or soar through the skies on dragonback NeverEnding Story style? It's the ultimate escape from the everyday.

Especially if your everyday involves homework and chores! And, I guess, hundreds of years ago, when people didn't have science to explain fossils or strange animal bones, dragons were a way to make sense of it all.

Exactly! Plus, they gave people a chance to tell stories about bravery and conquering the impossible.

And I suppose that's why they're still popular in books, movies, and video games... because they let us imagine, explore, and be heroes.

They really do! Dragons bring out the best, and sometimes the worst, in us. They're the perfect mix of mystery, magic, and mayhem.

And that's why dragons continue to breathe fire into our imaginations, from ancient myths to modern movies.

## THE S'QUIZ

"This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening...

1. In which country is the giant lizard, named the Komodo dragon, found? (Indonesia)"
2. Who was the famous European knight who protected villages from a dragon? (St. George)
3. We didn't tell you the answer to this one in the podcast, but I think you're smart enough to get it. In the Shrek movies, who is Dragon married to? (Donkey)

That's all we have time for today. Thanks for joining us as we explored the who, what, how, where, when, and why of Dragons.

Now get out there, and have a most excellent day!

Over and out.

## SOCIAL

Did you know that giant dinosaur bones once tricked people into thinking dragons were real?

Or that some legends say a dragon could strangle an elephant with its tail? Talk about a serious squeeze!

And in China, dragons are celebrated — they even dance in parades to bring good luck.

From fire-breathing monsters to friendly movie stars — dragons have always captured our imaginations. And with the new *How to Train Your Dragon* movie hitting cinemas, they're back in the spotlight!

So grab your sword — or maybe just a notepad — and check out the latest Squiz Kids Shortcut. We're diving into where dragons come from, who they are in stories, and why humans love them so much.

Find it in the Squiz Kids channel, wherever you get your podcasts — and don't forget to bring your marshmallows... just in case of any unexpected fire-breathing!