

Dino the Dragon

And his Flaming Firebox

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Background

This book was written at Moulsecoomb Primary School as part of the University of Chichester's Story Links research and development project. The project was directed by Trisha Waters, senior lecturer in SEN, and funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA).

Ten year old Lewis, his Mum, Tracey, and Teaching Assistant (TA), Mrs Gutsell, attended eight weekly sessions facilitated by Trisha. Each week, after a short chat with Mum, Trisha gave the opening of a story. Lewis, Mum, Mrs Gutsell and Trisha then continued to create the story together. After the session, the story was typed up at Lewis's reading skill level by Trisha and a copy sent home to be read by Lewis to his Mum. A copy was also given to Mrs Gutsell who used it as a reading text in literacy support sessions with Lewis during the week. Lewis also did the lovely illustrations.

At the end of the Story Links sessions, Lewis said that he would like his stories to be made into a book so that it might help other children to think about their feelings. So here it is!

Lewis, Lewis's Mum, Mrs Gutsell and Trisha hope that you enjoy the adventures of *Dino the Dragon and his Flaming Firebox*.



Dino the Dragon

Dino the dragon lay outside his cave. Never before had he felt so angry. He stormed off to find something to do. He was feeling angry because his friends from the next cave had stolen his football.

He felt his firebox heating up and before he knew it he was breathing fire. When he had cooled down a bit, he looked around. All the grass and bushes around were burnt to a cinder and the trees looked like black skeletons. "Oh no!" thought Dino, remembering the lovely green leaves, "I've done it again!"

Dino knew that none of the other young dragons wanted to play with him because they knew that he could be really nasty when he was angry. What was he going to do? He really wanted to be a good friend but somehow he kept losing his temper.

Just then his mother, Flora dragon, came up to Dino. She sat him on her lap and immediately Dino began to cry. He thought he was going to be told off but instead his mother said, "Dino, I know it is hard for you to control your firebox but I will help you. A lot of young dragons have to learn how to do this."

Dino knew that once he had learnt to control his anger all the little dragons would want to play with him and to be his friend. He decided to give it a try.



Dino Tries to Control his Firebox

The next day Dino thought to himself,

“I wonder what would help me to control my firebox?”

He sat there thinking and thinking. He didn't know what to do. He wanted to change and to act like the other young dragons. He wondered what he could do. An old man had once told him to try counting to ten, but Dino wasn't too sure about that. He felt he needed to find his own way to control his firebox.

Dino found a spot to sit, away from the other nasty dragons who bullied him and said nasty things. It was a dark cool place. He sat there every day after dragon school and thought about what he should do.

Dino thought to himself, “It's all very well just now when I'm feeling calm but what's going to happen when my firebox starts to heat up and the flames start pouring out of my nostrils. How will I manage then?”



The next morning Dino went to school. He could hear one of the dragons spreading nasty rumours about him. He could feel his firebox starting to get hot. But just in time he remembered to think instead of just blowing fire. He went up to one of the teachers and told them what was happening.

The teacher listened to Dino and stopped the dragon who was saying nasty things from going out to play. Dino was impressed that his new way of sorting things out seemed to be working. Now he wasn't the one getting into trouble. He wasn't the one who was isolated.



It had worked this once but would Dino really be able to keep it up. Would he be able to control his firebox the next day, the day after and the day after that. Dino wasn't sure but he really wanted to change. He spoke to his mother Flora.

Flora said, "Dino you are alright just as you are. It's OK to feel angry but it's how we deal with it that is important. I am here to help you - remember that."

Dino Loses His Cool

Dino was doing really well at controlling his fire-box until one day when he was out playing with the other young dragons. Some of the young dragons grouped together and started to wind Dino up.

“Green spike, green spikes”, they taunted. “Green spikes, green spikes.”

Now Dino had been doing really well at controlling his fire-box but the one thing he couldn't stand was to be called ‘green spikes’. He didn't know why, but it just made him furious. He could feel his fire-box heating up and knew that he had to watch himself.

He did really well and, though he felt a burn coming on, he managed to walk away. He told his Mum what had happened and she congratulated him for not rising to the taunts of those other dragons. “They were just trying to wind you up” said Flora.

Dino went back out to play. But some of the nasty dragons sneakily started up again, “Green spikes, green spikes”.



It was more than Dino could take. It just wasn't fair. Why couldn't they stop it. His fire-box was suddenly red hot. Before he knew it, flames were pouring out of his nostrils. He chased one of the teasing dragons, burning the bushes and trees in his path as he went. The other dragons stood by and laughed. They seemed to find it funny that they had managed to wind Dino up again.

Now if there was one thing that made Dino more angry than being called "Green spikes", it was being laughed at. He felt ready to explode. A massive flame burst out of his nostrils and smoke even came out of his ears. Everyone was looking at him.

Just then Flora looked out of her cave and saw what was going on. She swooped down to where Dino stood surrounded by the onlookers, picked him up in her paws and flew straight back to their cave.

"It's not fair. It's not fair," shouted Dino.

"I know, I know" said Flora, holding him in her lap.
"and you have been doing so well my little Dino."

"But I lost it. I lost my cool."

"Yes," said Flora, "but that doesn't mean you have to give up. It just means that you still have to practise controlling your firebox."

Dino felt secure and cosy sat on his mum's lap. His fire-box began to feel normal again. How he wished he could stay here forever."



After a while Dino fell asleep.

The next day Dino woke up and thought about all that had happened. He thought and thought. His mother, Flora, was wonderful but he was going to have to find a way to sort out his fire-box when she wasn't around to help him. How was he going to manage to do this?

Dino thought about all the different ways of controlling his firebox. He tried a new way every day.

One day when Dino was practising, the other dragons came over to him shouting 'Green Spikes! Green Spikes!'.

Dino shouted back, 'Why do you have to pick on me? I'm just the same as you, but I like different things.'

The other dragons didn't know what to say and walked away quietly. The next day they said, 'You were right and we're really sorry. Why don't you come over and play with us?'

Dino thought for a while and then replied, 'Yes, maybe I should'. And they played with each other the next day, and the next and forever on.



Dino Visits Old Smokey

Dino was doing really well at controlling his firebox until one day when he lost it again and burnt all the bushes on one side of the mountain. One dragon in particular, called Bruno, had made him angry and before Dino knew it the fire in his belly had burnt up everything around him.

Dino had started to get on well with most of the dragons. But just the fact that the other young dragons were now Dino's friends made Bruno cross. Dino had said to Bruno, "Why can't we just all get on?"

But Bruno didn't want to know. He had just started up again, "Green Spikes, green spikes." And that's when Dino had lost it ... again!

Now Dino looked over at the burnt mountainside and felt hopeless. How would he ever manage to really control his firebox?

Then he had an idea. He would visit Old Smokey, the wise dragon who lived at the top of the mountain. It was a long way to go but Dino was now old enough to fly. He spread his wings and flew and flew. After a while he felt so tired he thought of giving up but then he looked down and saw the black side of the mountain below him. "No", he said to himself, "I won't give up. I want to be able to be in control of my own firebox."

Dino arrived at last at the cave of Old Smokey. He looked impressive sat on top of his pile of glittering jewels. Dino told him everything that had been going on.

Then Old Smokey spoke, "Dino, you will never be able to control what other people do. All you can do is control yourself. You must ignore Bruno when he says nasty things to you. It is hard, especially when you have fire in your



belly, but this is the only thing to do. Then Bruno will get wound up because you are ignoring him. When Bruno gets angry and burn things up because you have ignored him, he will be the one who gets into trouble.”

Dino thanked Old Smokey for his advice and flew back down the mountain. Just as he landed who should be there but Bruno. “Green Spikes, green spikes,” taunted Bruno.

But this time Dino ignored him. Bruno was furious. Soon flames were bursting out of Bruno’s nostrils burning up the bushes in front of him. All the other dragons rushed over and started to laugh at Bruno which made him even angrier.

Then Dino spoke to the other dragons, “Don’t laugh at him. It’s not nice. That used to happen to me and I know it’s horrible when people laugh at you.”



The young dragons stopped laughing. Since Dino had started to control his firebox they had started to respect him and take notice of what he said.

Bruno got into big trouble for burning the bushes but when he had calmed down he came over to Dino and said,

“I’m sorry Dino for calling you names and thank you for stopping the dragons from laughing at me.”

“That’s alright”, said Dino. “I know how you felt.”

A Game of Smoke Rings

Dino felt quite proud of himself. He was getting the hang of controlling his fire-box.

Dino decided to ask some of the other dragons to play smoke-rings. They all loved the game. Dino watched as the other dragons took turns to blow the most enormous rings. Then it was Dino's turn. He felt so ashamed when all he could manage was a tiny puny little ring. He tried again but his second ring was no better.



Then Dino's shame and embarrassment turned to anger and he could feel his belly heating up. Why couldn't he blow good smoke rings like all the other dragons. Dino didn't want to lose his cool in front of the other dragons so he turned and ran across the field. He ran and ran.

When he stopped he could feel his firebox was still red hot. It would be so easy to let out a huge flame and burn everything around him. But Dino didn't want to do this anymore. What could he do?

He put his paw on his belly to feel the heat from his firebox. As he did this his belly started to cool down.

Dino breathed a sigh of relief. He was proud that he'd managed to cool down his firebox on his own.

When he rejoined the other dragons they were still playing. He asked Bruno, who had recently become his friend, to show him how to blow bigger rings. Bruno showed Dino how to take a big breath and then let it out very slowly while pointing his snout in the air. Dino practised really hard and slowly his rings got bigger and bigger. Sometimes when he blew a rubbish one, his firebox would start to heat up but then Dino stroked his belly with his paw and it would calm down again.

The next day all the dragons had to go to school and they were joined by a new dragon. Dino was hoping that the new dragon would play smoke rings with him at play time but all the other dragons wanted to play with him as well. At lunchtime Dino sat on his own while all the other dragons talked to the new dragon. Dino was feeling upset. He went to the toilet which is where he always went when he was upset at school. Dino's teacher found him there and took him back to the classroom. Dino told her what was going on.

The teacher suggested that Dino tried to join in with the other dragons' games instead of always wanting them to play his game. Dino gave it a go. He talked to the other dragons about it and they decided to take turns. Sometimes they played smoke-rings which was now Dino's favourite game and sometimes football which was the new dragon's favourite game. Things went much better for Dino after that and he was often to be seen playing happily with the other young dragons.



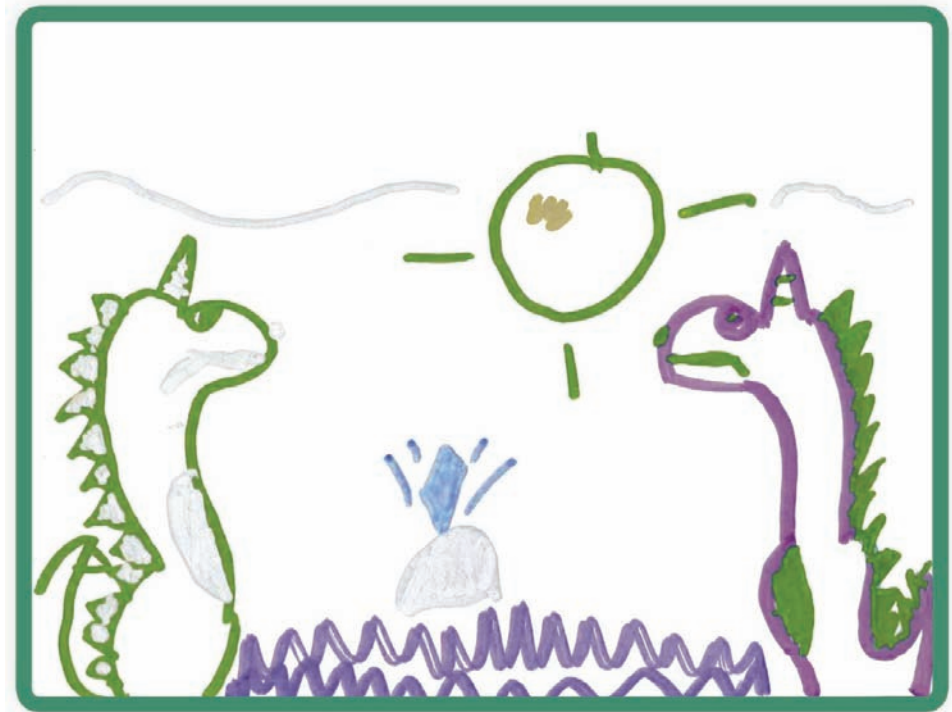
The Blue Sapphire

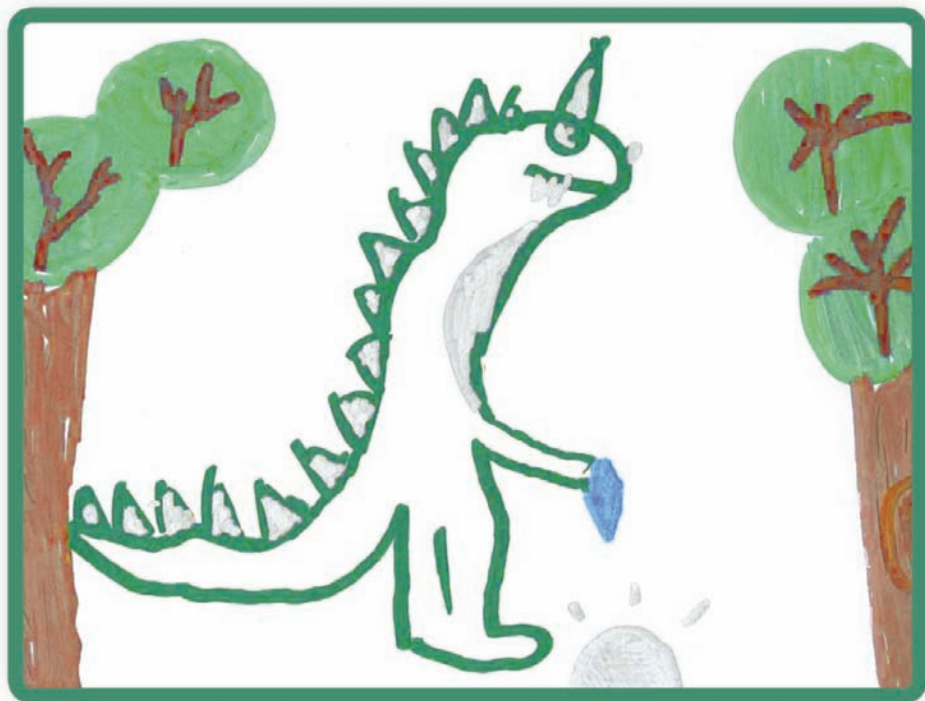
When Dino woke up the next day he felt really happy to be going to school. He was looking forward to playing smoke rings and thought the day would be perfect. As he lay on his jewel pile, he thought of all the things he would do. Before he knew it, his eyelids began to close and he was fast asleep again. When he woke up the sun was high in the sky.

He ran to find Flora but she said, “Well there’s no point going to dragon school now. It’s far too late.”

Dino was furious and he stormed back to his jewel pile. Flora knew there was no point talking to Dino when he was angry, so she left him for half an hour to calm down. Then she took him a bowl of steaming hot chocolate, his favourite drink, and said, “Dino why don’t you fly off and find a new jewel for your jewel pile as you’ve missed school now. All dragons need a good jewel pile as they get older.”

Dino set off. On his way he met Bruno who had just come out of school. They decided to look for jewels together. They flew down the valley looking everywhere for jewels.





At last they saw something glistening in the distance. They flapped their wings and set off in that direction. At last they arrived but to their disappointment it was just an old tin can glinting in the sun. Dino felt his firebox heating up. He started to kick a rock. "What a stupid idea this is", shouted Dino. "I wish I hadn't missed school."

Now Dino had told Bruno before about how he sometimes lost his temper and what he needed to do. Bruno remembered this now. He said to Dino, "Dino, remember to stroke your tummy. Remember how to calm yourself down." Dino put his paw on his tummy and started to stroke his belly. Slowly his firebox cooled down.

Then Dino and Bruno laughed. They realised this was an adventure. They decided to keep looking for jewels. They looked behind the rocks. They looked under the rocks. Then Dino lifted a large log. There glistening in the sun was the most beautiful huge blue jewel Dino had ever seen. He held it up to the sun and the blue sapphire glistened in the light. "I don't have a blue sapphire," said Dino. "This will be perfect for my jewel pile."

"Hang on," said Bruno, "who says it's yours?"

Then Bruno and Dino started to fight. Just then Dino dropped the jewel. It fell onto a rock and split in half. "Oh, dear," said Dino. "It's not as beautiful but there is one for each of us."

Then Dino and Bruno decided that the next time they went searching for jewels they would keep looking until they found an even number of jewels and then divide them between them instead of fighting.

The Big Fire

Dino was out playing smoke rings with the other young dragons and noticed that his friend Bruno was in a bit of a mood. When no one was looking Bruno let out a fiery breath and burnt one of the bushes.

Everyone turned round and started to blame Dino. It wasn't me shouted Dino. He was angry that he was getting the blame. He knew he wasn't perfect but this time it was not his fault. Dino's firebox started to heat up. Suddenly a flame shot out of his nostrils burning a nearby bush.

"Well how comes you've just burnt a bush now," shouted one of the others.

"But I didn't burn the other bush," shouted Dino again. "It was probably the new dragon."

Then the new dragon started to get angry and soon fire was shooting out of his mouth. Another bush caught fire. Soon they were all completely surrounded by burning bushes. Dino had an injured wing and the other young dragons couldn't fly yet. They were trapped.



Dino started to shout, "Mum, Mum," but Flora was too far away to hear.

The fire was getting bigger and bigger. All the young dragons were now shouting for their mothers.

Then Dino said to Bruno, "Let's try to kick the dust over the flames. That should take away the oxygen and help put out the fire."

So all the young dragons started to kick up the dust. Some of the flames were put out but soon other bushes caught fire.

Then Dino remembered he had a phone in his pocket. Flora had given it to him in case he got lost in the woods. He rang Flora and she called the Dragon Rescue Brigade who soon arrived with a humongous lorry. The Dragon Rescue Brigade used up all their water trying to put out the flames but still the fire raged.

Then Dino and Bruno had a brilliant idea. They told the young dragons to cut down a tree and to lay it across the burning bushes. Then they all walked across the tree before it caught fire itself. At last Dino and his friends were safe. But Dino couldn't help thinking it was unfair to leave the fire as there might be others trapped in there.

So Dino, Bruno, the young dragons and all their parents helped drag the Dragon Rescue Brigade's water pipe down to the river. When the pump was turned on in the lorry there was the biggest most powerful spray of water that Dino had ever seen. Soon the fire was extinguished and all that was left was a charred, soot covered bit of mountainside.

All the dragons helped to remove the blackened bits of burnt bush and tree. At last the ground was swept clear and left ready for new grass to grow.

Dino, his friends and their parents all went back to their caves for a well-deserved rest.



The Diamond Mountain

One day Flora said, “Dino, now you are getting older I think it’s time for you to find a special diamond for the top of your jewel pile.”

Dino knew that this might take some time and effort so he packed himself some lunch, said goodbye to Flora and set off.

First he headed down to the woods. He looked under rocks and behind the bushes but there were no jewels to be seen anywhere. Then Dino heard the wise owl of the woods calling,



“Twit-twoo, twit-twoo. Dino, this is not the place for you.

To find the diamond that you seek. You must ascend the highest peak.”

So Dino left the woods and set off in the direction of the highest mountain. It was a long trek and for the last part of the journey he spread his wings which had now healed and flew up. Up, up and up he flew.

At last he reached the mountain peak and in the distance he could see something glistening.

As he got closer it became so bright he couldn't look at it. Dino closed his eyes but started to go off course. So he landed and slowly opened one eye and then the other. Gradually Dino's eyes became accustomed to the brightness. Dino saw that there was not one but many diamonds in this place. He decided he would stay and live here.

But then he thought of Flora and all his friends down the mountain. He needed to talk this through with his mother. Dino flew back down the mountain until he arrived home. Flora felt very sad to think of her Dino living so far away. Dino wanted to show Flora the diamond mountain so they flew back together. Dino felt really grown up to be showing his mother a place which he knew but where she had never been before.

Flora looked around at this place that sparkled with diamonds. She thought it was very special and agreed to come and live in a cave near Dino on the diamond mountain.



Dino built a special bridge between his cave and Flora's so that they could see each other every morning.

Dino and Flora also wanted to be able to see their friends. So Dino built lots more bridges and dug tunnels through the mountain so that they would still be able to visit them.

Dino was really excited to be living in this wonderful place. He chose the biggest diamond he could find and set it on top of his jewel pile. Now he felt that he was really a grown up dragon.

Flora looked at her son and felt so proud of him.



Find out more about the Story Links project at www.therapeuticstorywriting.com/StoryLinks

