

BRUCE COVILLE  
JEREMY THATCHER,  
DRAGON  
HATCHER



DRAGONS ARE A BOY'S BEST FRIEND.

A MAGIC SHOP BOOK



## ONE



# Love Letter of Doom

Jeremy Thatcher crumpled his paper in disgust. The dragon he had been trying to draw looked like a dog with wings.

"Be right back," he whispered to his friend, Specimen. But as he started toward the paper cupboard a sharp voice asked, "Something wrong, Mr. Thatcher?"

Jeremy froze. One of the problems with having Mr. Kravitz for art was that you never knew when it was safe to get a fresh sheet of paper. Clearly, this wasn't one of those days.

The tall, pudgy teacher lumbered over to stand in front of Jeremy. "Didn't you hear the school board has frozen spending?" he asked. "That means no new paper orders for the rest of the year. So tell me, is another sheet of paper needed because that drawing was so bad—or because your talent is so important?"

Mr. Kravitz gave Jeremy a smug, nasty smile and waited for him to answer.

Jeremy hesitated. He wanted to say that his talent *was* that important, but he knew that answer would only bring more scorn. He decided to say nothing. After a moment of uncomfortable silence, he turned and shambled back to his seat.

As Jeremy slid into his chair, Specimen pointed to a square of lavender paper tucked under the corner of Jeremy's books. "From Mary Lou Hutton," he whispered. "Special Delivery."

Jeremy resisted the urge to reach out and grab the note. *No sense in giving Mr. Kravitz something else to complain about*, he thought. *But what am I supposed to do now? My paper is gone, Mr. Kravitz won't let me get more, and I've got fifteen minutes to go before art is over.*

His eyes drifted back to the note. He found himself reaching toward the paper. Quickly, he drew his hand back. *Where's Mr. Kravitz?*

Looking around, Jeremy spotted the art teacher bending over Jymn Magon's desk.

*Probably telling him in detail what's wrong with his picture*, thought Jeremy. Pretending to look at something else, he tugged the lavender square from its hiding place, unfolded it, and began to read. Before Jeremy could finish, Mr. Kravitz came up and snatched the note from his fingers.

"Well, Mr. Thatcher," he said gleefully. "I see you've forgotten my feeling about notes in the classroom."

Jeremy's cheeks began to burn. "Give it back!" he said.

"I'm afraid I can't do that," replied Mr. Kravitz,



with mock sincerity. "It's against my rules. However, since you didn't have a chance to read it to yourself, I will read it aloud for you before I destroy it."

"Don't!" cried Jeremy in terror.

But Mr. Kravitz had begun. "Dear Jeremy," he read, in mincing tones. "I think you are *incredibly* cute, even if you are the shortest boy in the sixth grade. I am going to kiss you after school today if it's the last thing I ever do."

Mr. Kravitz paused, then said, "Oh, yes—there's a P.S. According to this, you have *beautiful* eyes."

The classroom rocked with laughter. Jeremy closed his "beautiful" eyes, his face so hot that even the tips of his ears were burning.

Mr. Kravitz folded the note and tucked it into his pocket. "No need to embarrass the person who wrote this by reading her signature," he said. "Let's just remember that notes are *not* appreciated in this classroom."

The injustice made Jeremy's head spin. For trying to read a note someone else had given him, he was made to suffer complete humiliation. Yet the person who *sent* the note was getting off with only a warning. What was going on here?

It didn't take him long to figure out the answer. Mary Lou's father was on the school board, so Mr. Kravitz wasn't going to embarrass *her*. Jeremy quivered with the unfairness of it.

"It stinks," he said to Specimen that afternoon. "Stinks, stinks, stinks."



# A SCALY SITUATION

JEREMY THATCHER KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT RAISING animals—after all, his dad is a veterinarian.

But after he leaves Mr. Elives' magic shop with a strange marbled egg, it soon becomes clear that this is one pet he wasn't prepared for! How is he supposed to keep a flame-breathing dragon with razor-sharp teeth and an out-of-control appetite in his bedroom?

But if the playful baby dragon is ever to grow up to become a magnificent beast of myth and legend, it *needs* Jeremy. And though he doesn't know it yet, Jeremy needs a dragon.

★ "A funny, enjoyable, imaginative story whose serious undercurrents lend it unexpected depth."

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred)

"Will bring laughter and near tears to readers . . . Once again, Coville offers a fantasy that younger readers can handle easily, and one in which dragons really exist for a little while."

—*School Library Journal*

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ISBN 978-0-15-206252-1



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