

Fire in the Sky- Part 2

"Well, Mom," I started, "I-I made a new friend."

It wasn't a lie, if I considered Malcolm a friend, but didn't reveal anything overly shocking. My mom was pretty surprised, though, and asked why I seemed so nervous about it. I quickly answered that I had wanted to tell her, but since it was a new friendship, I didn't want her to be upset if it didn't last. She had always been more concerned about my lack of close friends than I ever was.

My mother satisfied for the moment, I went back upstairs to check on Malcolm. One would expect that by this time, my room would be a mess, that he would have rifled through all my stuff, and knocked lamps onto the floor. This was not at all the case. He was sitting quietly on my bed, exactly as I had left him.

"Hey," I whispered.

"Oh, hi," he paused, seeming troubled. "I really miss my momma," he said, finally.

"I know. I'm sure she misses you, too."

I was desperately searching my brain for a way to get him home. I clearly needed help, but who was going to believe me that I had a lost baby dragon, much less know where I should take him?

Then, it hit me like a cannonball. Mrs. Williams, the strange, elderly woman who lived three houses down the street. Whenever I passed by, she would always greet me with some comment about centaurs or magic potions or flying carpets. Up until now, I had always written her off as crazy (This was the general consensus in the neighborhood), but, maybe, she actually knew something. I decided it couldn't hurt to try. She wouldn't think I was nuts, and no one would believe her if she told them I had asked her questions about supposedly mythical creatures.

I quickly explained this to Malcolm, leaving out the parts about thinking Mrs. Williams was out of it for believing in dragons and such. I told him I would go talk to her by myself, then bring him over if she could help us.

Just at that moment, I heard my mother yell, "Becca, it's time for dinner!"

The mission would have to wait until after I ate. I threw on an old hoodie, figuring this would be the best way to smuggle some food to my room for Malcolm.

Dinner that night was hamburgers with French fries. Whenever my mom wasn't looking, I shoved small bits of food into the pocket of my sweatshirt. I tried to eat as quickly as I could, but my mom kept pressing me for details about my "friend." I kept it to the almost-truth: We had a chance meeting when I was walking home from school, he seemed to really like the color red, and was sweet.

I never should have said the “friend” was a boy. This excited my mother on a whole other level. I thought I would never get away from the table, but I managed to by saying I had a ton of homework to do.

Malcolm met me at the door of my bedroom.

“What’s for dinner?” he asked.

Because I didn’t have a plate or anything, I fed him bits of burger and small fries out of my hand. It reminded me of the petting zoos I had visited when I was younger. He really liked the hamburger (Walmart’s finest), but didn’t care for the “beaten potato puffs,” as he called them.

“I’m thirsty,” he whined when he was finished.

This presented another problem, because Malcolm couldn’t drink out of the cups in the bathroom, but it would be seriously suspicious for me to bring a full water bottle to my room, then leave it there while I went for a walk. We decided he would come with me on my walk, and I would bring the bottle for him to drink out of. Luckily, he could fly out my window, so I wouldn’t have to worry about getting him past Mom. I opened the window, popped out the screen, and released Malcolm into the night. He landed safely, inches from Mom’s prized tulips.

I sprinted down the stairs, grabbed and filled my water bottle, and told Mom I was going for a walk. She told me to be back before dark.

I met Malcolm in the side yard, and gave him a drink from the bottle. I told him he could come with me to see Mrs. Williams, since I wouldn't be able to make two trips before dark, and I didn't want to wait so long that his momma was far away. Unfortunately, I told him, he would have to ride in my backpack again, because I still didn't have a leash. He agreed and we set off down the street.

It took nearly a minute to reach Mrs. Williams house. I had never actually knocked on her door, or anyone else's. I walked up the porch steps and towards the door, wondering why I had thought this was such a good idea. There was no doorbell, just a knocker shaped like, of all things, a dragon. I lifted it, took a deep breath, and knocked twice. I could feel Malcolm shifting in an attempt to see around me.

There was silence. I'm sure it was only a minute or two, but it seemed to stretch on for hours. Finally, I heard movement inside. Someone walking toward the door, unlocking it, and turning the doorknob. The door creaked open. I held my breath.

What will Becca say to Mrs. Williams? Is Mrs. Williams really crazy? Will Malcolm's cover be blown? Find out in the third installment of *Fire in the Sky*.