

Fire in the Sky- Part 3

"Oh, hello, Becca!" Mrs. Williams said rather excitedly. "I was shocked when I heard the knocker. The only person who ever uses it is the UPS man, and he never comes this late."

Mrs. Williams seemed thrilled to have company, but I just stood there, stunned, willing Malcolm to stop moving, and hoping I would come up with something to say.

"Hi, Mrs. Williams," I said with a forced smile. Like I said earlier, I really have a way with words. "I'd like to ask you some questions. Could I come in for a few minutes?" I continued.

"Certainly, dear," she replied. "You can leave your shoes on; don't worry about it."

As Mrs. Williams led me to the kitchen, I couldn't help but notice the décor of her home. The colors were dark: browns, blacks, and burgundy, but in a warmish way. There was a set of chestnut stairs in the entryway, and a rather ugly throw rug. We turned to the right of the door and went into the dining room, which was large for a woman who lived alone. The table was a deep mahogany with twelve matching chairs. The dining room led to the kitchen, where Mrs. Williams invited me to sit on a stool at the island. I think the island was made of black quartz. I did so, and set my bag (with Malcolm inside) on the floor at my feet.

“Would you care for some tea, dear? I had just put the kettle on before you arrived,” she asked.

“Uh, yes, please,” I replied. I wasn't really thirsty, but she seemed so eager, and I did like tea.

She poured me a cup, set cream and sugar on the table, and sat down on the other stool. We sat in silence as we fixed our tea, me adding two lumps of sugar and a touch of cream, her, one lump and about a tablespoon.

Finally, she spoke. “Now what was it that you wanted to ask me?”

“Well, I'm doing a report for school,” I began. (This was a classic lie for getting information that even I could pull off.) “It's about dragons, and I know you're pretty interested in that type of thing, so I was hoping you could tell me what you know.”

“A report on dragons. How unique and fascinating! I'll certainly help you.” She was genuinely excited.

I realized I didn't have a notepad or pen, and that was pretty suspicious, so I asked to borrow one. She directed me to a drawer next to the stove, where I found a pink, unlined notepad and a pen with smiley faces on it. I sat back down.

“Dragons,” Mrs. Williams said thoughtfully. “Well, they come in a lot of different colors: black, blue, purple, sometimes dark green or brown, and red.

They can be mainly one color, and speckled another. They don't usually have stripes. Pure red are my favorite, especially small ones." I could see Malcolm swelling with pride at my feet.

"You can tell where dragons are from by their color," she continued. I pretended to be taking detailed notes; Really, I was just scribbling, waiting for her to say something that would help Malcolm and me.

"Blue and black ones are native to Asia, green and brown to the woodlands of the Americas, purple to the European mountains, and red to the Sahara Desert in Africa. Recently, many have moved to colonies deep in the woods of the Northeast United States and Canada, places like East and West Asiatican. Interbreeding in new colonies causes the speckles. There used to be a sizable colony of mostly red dragons about 30 miles from here called Brigalandia, but it was overrun by development, and they decided to migrate a few days ago. I would hazard a guess that's where your little friend is from."

She gestured toward the bag at my feet. I was speechless, wondering how she knew, but then I noticed that Malcolm's nose was sticking out, and he was moving a lot.

"It's alright, dear. There's nothing to be worried about." Mrs. Williams paused, then added, "Would you like to tell me why you're really here, as I don't think it has much to do with a project for school?"

She was right: It was okay. She would believe me about Malcolm, and didn't think I was crazy. She seemed knowledgeable about dragons, so she would likely be able to help us. I relaxed, knowing I had found an ally, but I felt a little guilty now that I knew she wasn't nuts, at least, not entirely.

"Oh, and you can come out of the bag if you'd like, dear," she said to Malcolm, who came out sheepishly and sat on my lap. "Go on, Becca," she encouraged.

I told her the whole story about Malcolm: how I had found him, that he had been separated from his momma and was now lost, how I took him home and hid him, and that I thought she was the only person who might know what to do. Again, I left out the part about thinking she was crazy. She listened attentively, and smiled, never once seeming surprised. She laughed when I told her about the melted sneakers and Malcolm's request for smoked chipmunk. I realized this was the most I had talked to someone other than Mom since my parent's divorce, and it felt great.

Reaching the end of my story, I asked, "So, Mrs. Williams, do you think you can help get Malcolm back to his momma?"

"I think so. I know where East and West Asiatican are, and I can take the two of you there. Of course, it's too late to go tonight, but I'm available first thing tomorrow," she laughed, "and any other time for the foreseeable future. We'll just need your mom's permission, Becca." She must have seen my eyes

grow wide with concern because she added, “I can ask her for your help getting groceries.”

Oh, Mrs. Williams, you're the nicest human I've ever met, next to Becca! Of course..., you're the only human I've ever met..., but I still think you're very nice, “Malcolm said.

“Thank you so much,” I added, “For all your help.”

“There's just one...well actually, two, things I'd like you to do for me, if you can,” Mrs. Williams said, slowly.

“What is it?” I asked, slightly afraid of what she might ask for.

What will Mrs. Williams's requests be? Will Becca be able to grant them?
Will Malcolm finally be reunited with his momma? Find out in the final installment of Fire *in the Sky*.