

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON

Cressida Cowell

After breakfast, hiccup went to sit on the front step beside his grandfather, who was smoking a pipe. It was a beautiful, cold, clear winter's morning, with not a breath of wind and the sea all round as flat as glass.

Old Wrinkly blew out smoke rings contentedly as he watched the sun coming up. Hiccup shivered and chucked stones into the bracken. Neither of them spoke for a long time.

At last Hiccup said, 'I got that dragon.'

'I said you would, didn't I?' replied Old Wrinkly, very pleased with himself. Old wrinkly had taken up soothsaying in his old age, mostly unsuccessfully.

Looking into the future is a complicated business. So he was particularly pleased that he'd got this right.

'Something extraordinary, you said,' complained Hiccup. 'A truly unusual dragon you said. An animal that would really make me stand out from the crowd.'

'Absolutely,' agreed Old Wrinkly. 'The entrails were undeniable.'

'The only extraordinary thing about this dragon,' continued Hiccup, is how extraordinarily SMALL it is. In that it is super-unusual. I'm even more of a laughing-stock than ever.'

'Oh dear,' said Old Wrinkly, chuckling in a wheezy way over his pipe.