

Wizard, Dragon and her lost eggs



A story about the statues at Lake Meadows

A long, long, long time ago – longer ago even than when the dinosaurs roamed the world – a Dragon and a Wizard were flying over Billericay, when they looked down and saw a beautiful park beneath them



They were looking for a new home, so they flew down to see what it was like ... and they decided to stay!

Of course Log Creature did not arrive until the night of a big storm, but that is another story.

Every child who plays at Lake Meadows knows it is a very special park. But did you know that it is also a magical park, full of secrets? Listen carefully and I'll tell you all about the three mythical creatures who made Lake Meadows their home.

First there was Wizard... Now Wizard was very wise and knew lots of spells, but he was also a very kind and friendly wizard too.



He had a big nose (because he was very nosey!) and a long, silver-grey plaited beard.

He wore a crumpled old purple hat, a long, flowing purple robe and orange shoes.

To help him cast his spells, he had a golden wand with a dragon's head handle, and he had a magic yellow umbrella, which he could use to help him fly up and away into the sky.

He lived in a crumbling old fort, which no one else knew about, deep at the bottom of the lake.

Wizard usually only came out at night when no-one could see him – but sometimes, if you were very lucky, and you were a child, you might just see him during the day.

He always preferred children to be quiet when they saw him in the park – if they were noisy he would run away to hide!

His favourite places in the park were the gardens, where he could smell the thyme and the lavender and the rosemary, and the woods, where he could kick his way through the heaps of dry crispy leaves.

Wizard had two special friends who shared the park with him.



One was Log Creature, who was very old, very knobbly and very warty. He lived in the old boat-house near one of the islands.

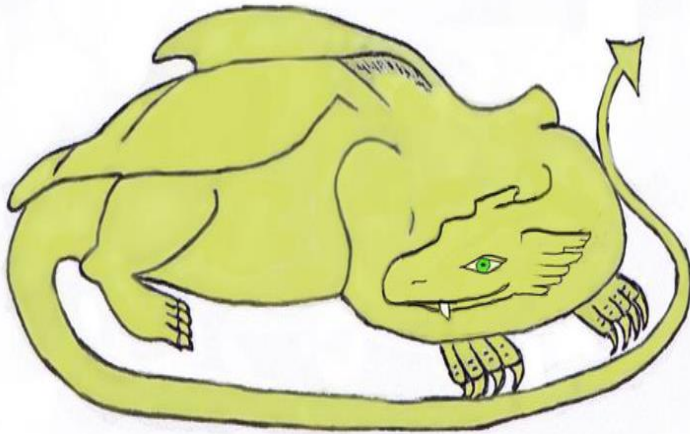
Sometimes, usually at dusk or dawn, he loved to dance in the flower meadow. He would often hum his favourite songs to himself as he danced.

Log Creature also loved it when the children came to play around him. He never minded them climbing on his back, as long as they were careful.



He especially loved it when they came to have picnics in the summertime. He liked listening to the stories that everyone told as they sat on the story stools that were all around his feet.

Wizard's best friend, though, was Dragon.



When she was young, Wizard had told her wonderful stories and showed her his most secret spells.

Then when she grew up, she would blow circles of red, yellow and orange fire from her burning hot nostrils. Wizard and Dragon liked to dance and play with the glowing fire but, of course, children knew they must never do this as they would get burnt. Wizard and Dragon were not of the same world as children.

Dragon and Wizard also liked to go on flying adventures together at night-time, Dragon flapping her huge wings like a bird and Wizard using his yellow umbrella to carry himself high into the sky. After dark, they would fly through the night sky until they could see the lights of a town far below.

Now Dragon's favourite food in the whole world was popcorn! So, after the audience had all gone home, she would swoop down swiftly, sneak inside a cinema and then gobble up all of the popcorn that people had left on the floor!



When she was full, Dragon would fall fast asleep on a cloud and Wizard would watch over her until morning.

Now, one warm day, about one hundred years ago, Dragon was snoozing quietly in her cave on the island in the middle of the lake.



She loved the warm feel of the sun on her back and the sound of the water drip-dripping in the cave behind her.

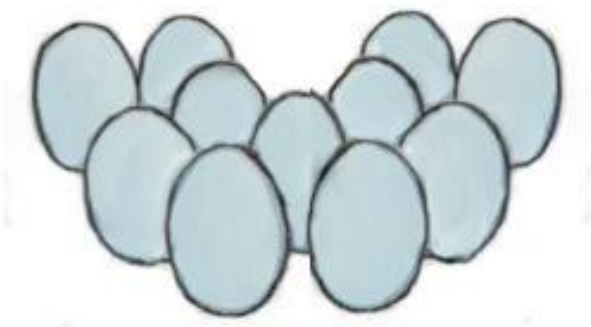
Her bright, grass-green scales shone and glistened gold in the early morning light and her huge wings were folded neatly over her back.

Each of her four fearsome feet had four sharp, gold, claws and her tail curved gracefully behind her, ending in a spear-shaped tip.

If you were to get close enough to her, you would find that she smelled of the woods ... of old leaves and damp mushrooms, and every sleepy breath was green and greasy and smelled of scorching.

Dragon was enjoying her afternoon snooze that day, when suddenly she woke up! She felt uncomfortable ... she could feel lots of large, hard, roundish shapes underneath her.

She turned her head round to see what was causing such a funny feeling. Do you know what it was?



Yes, Dragon had laid some eggs! She gasped as she tried to count all her beautiful, pale blue eggs, which were still warm and smooth - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 ...11!

Quietly, she called out to Wizard to come and look.

Even though he was asleep in the fort at the bottom of the lake, his magic hearing meant he could pick up even the quietest of the Dragon's whispers.

He quickly magicked himself over to the island where Dragon lived.

'Look, Wizard,' said Dragon, lifting up the wing that was protecting her precious eggs. 'I've laid the prettiest eggs you've ever seen! But what am I supposed to do with them now?'

Wizard smiled. 'Everyone knows that Dragon's eggs are very special – so much so that they take one hundred years to hatch,' he said. 'We'll need to take especially good care of them.'

‘But one hundred years is a really long time,’ said Dragon.
‘How will we remember when it’s time for them to hatch?’

Wizard scratched his beard and had a think, and then he searched in his enormous book of spells to find just the right one.

Suddenly he had a good idea. ‘I know!’ he cried.
‘I’ll cast a special time spell over the lake’.

‘When just one hundred years have passed, and the eggs are ready to hatch, a huge spray of water will shoot up from the lake, like a fountain.’

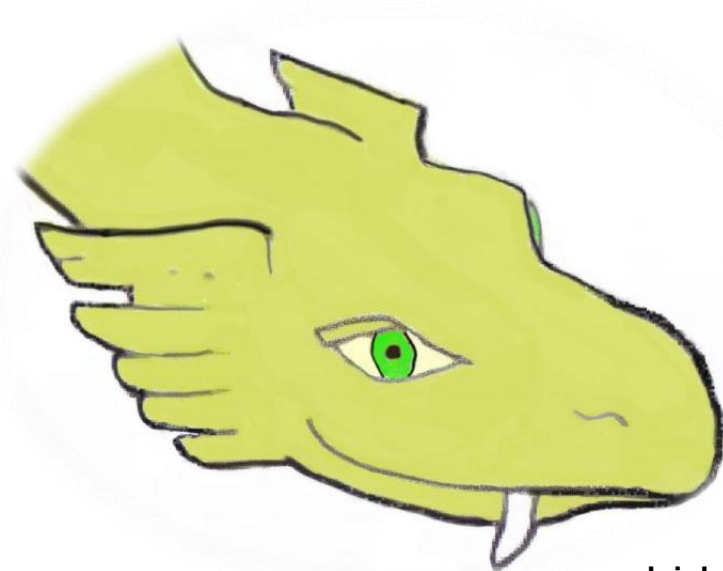


So Wizard went off to perform his magic spell on the lake, taking with him his wand with the dragon-head handle and his enormous book of spells.

Dragon wasn’t sure that the spell would work – sometimes, Wizard would forget the magic words and that could be disastrous. He had made a few mistakes over the years! She crossed her claws and hoped he would get the spell right his time.

While he was gone, Dragon started making a soft nest ready for her eggs, out of twigs and soft feathers that the ducks had left behind on the island.

But then she started to worry.....



What if someone came to the island wanting to steal her special blue eggs?

‘It wouldn’t take them very long to find them,’ she thought. “I have to hide them somewhere safe. Somewhere else, not here in my cave.”

Carefully she gathered up the pale blue eggs in the crook of her wing and flew up, high in the sky, over the island and into the park.

Wizard, who had just finished putting his spell on the lake, saw her flying high overhead and started to shout after her.

‘Where are you going, Dragon?’ he cried. ‘You should leave your eggs on the island where they were! They’ll be safe there!’

‘No they won’t,’ Dragon called down to Wizard. ‘I’m going to hide them where nobody will find them!’

‘That’s just SILLY, Dragon!’ said Wizard. ‘Come back down here this minute!’

But Dragon didn’t want to listen to Wizard. In fact, she was very, very cross that he had tried to tell her what to do with her precious eggs. After all, mothers always know what’s best!

She quickly found several special, safe places around the park to hide her eggs and covered them gently and carefully with leaves. She believed they’d be quite safe there!

All the while she kept thinking about what Wizard had said and she got crosser and crosser about him interfering.

“I don’t think I want to talk to Wizard any more”, she thought to herself.

And do you know what happened? Wizard went off in a huff and sulked; and Dragon didn’t want to be with him. They just went their separate ways and avoided seeing each other.



They were both so cross that they didn’t ever want to talk with each other ever again. Oh dear, what a terrible shame! They had been such good friends and now they had fallen out with each other! Time passed and before they knew it, nearly one hundred years had passed and they still hadn’t said a single word to each other.

Then one damp day, Dragon was snoozing in her cave on the island when she heard a strange sound coming from the lake.

At first it just sounded like the gentle pitter patter of rain on the water, but then it got louder and louder, splish, splash splish, splash ROAR! It was the fountain in the lake that the Wizard had created in his spell!



And you know what that meant it was time for the eggs to hatch! ‘Oh Gosh!’ said Dragon, ‘It’s time, at last, for me to finally meet my precious baby dragons!’

She rushed around her cave, tidying up – her tail swishing from left to right, banging into the walls of the cave and causing a loud noise that you could hear right across the park.

Soon she had everything ready – but there was a problem. She couldn’t remember where she had hidden those eggs!

Dragon took off from the island and started to fly over the park; round and round she flew, desperately hoping she would remember where the eggs were hidden. But they were nowhere to be seen!

Feeling sad and rather worried, she started to cry big, wet tears that fell in huge spots onto the play area below. Luckily only the children noticed, because only the children could see Dragon and feel her tears.

They called out to her, 'Hello Dragon! Dragon what's the matter? Why are you crying?'



Hoping the children could help her, Dragon swooped down to the play area, with a great whirring of her huge wings.

The rain was still pitter-pattering down and she saw that the children were cold and their teeth were chattering – brrrrrrr – so she wrapped her wings around them and gently warmed them with her breath.

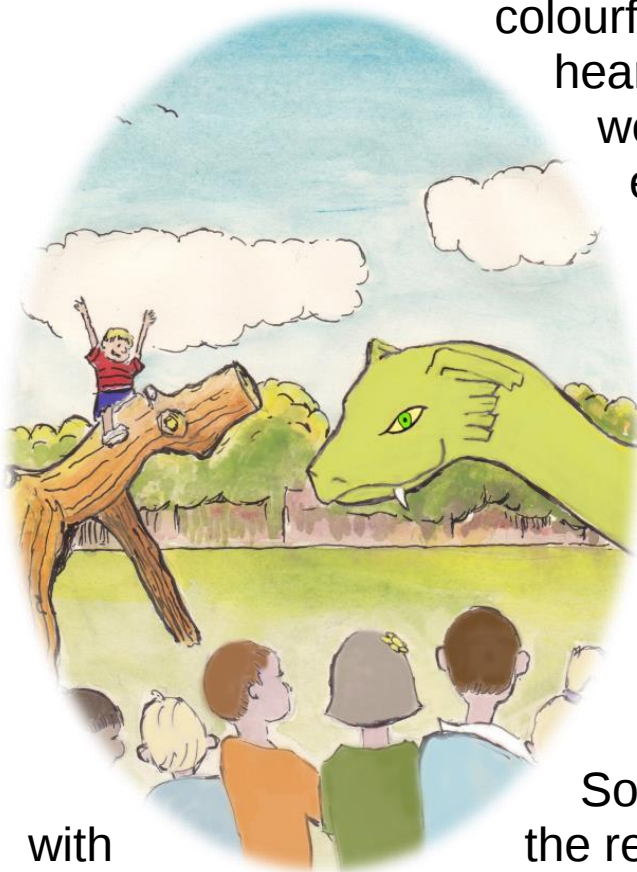
Quickly she told them the story of her lost eggs, and the kind children said they would do their best to help her find them and that they would search everywhere. So they all set off together, singing a searching song as they went:

There's a Dragon in the park who needs to find her eggs.

*She swoops down to the earth with her scaly wings and legs.
She's searching high and low, just wherever can they be?
Come and help her find them, you and me!*

They searched in the most likely places in the park
in the new rhododendron shrubbery, around the bowls
green, by the tennis courts, in the play area, in the garden
of the Child in the Park and even down by the old
boathouse.

Finally they searched in the flower meadow, where they
found Log Creature dancing daintily amongst the
colourful flowers. Luckily, when he
heard the story, he said that he,
would help search for the
eggs too. "The more the
merrier!" he said.



After searching for some
time, the children started
to feel really hungry, so
Dragon kindly gave them
some of her spare popcorn
and some raspberries to
eat.

with
felt

the search again.

Soon their faces were dripping
the red juice and their tummies
really full. They were ready to start

By now the rain had almost stopped, so the children
decided they should go off to look for the eggs in the
woods, squelching through the mud and leaves of the
forest floor.

Dragon walked beside them on her big back legs and Log Creature trundled along behind, humming the searching song as he went.

Even though it was quite misty in the woods and full of strange, scary sounds, the children knew that Dragon and Log Creature would protect them and they would be safe.



To keep them from getting frightened, Dragon encouraged them to sing their searching song again:

*There's a Dragon in the park who needs to find her eggs.
She swoops down to the earth with her scaly wings and legs.
She's searching high and low, just wherever can they be?
Come and help her find them, you and me!*

They searched high and they searched low, but there were just no sign of the eggs anywhere in the wood.

Suddenly Log Creature had an idea ...

He suggested that Dragon should go and visit Wizard in his fort under the water, just in case he knew anything about them.

Dragon was worried because she hadn't visited Wizard in nearly a hundred years, ever since their argument.

She knew that finding her eggs was very important, so she agreed with Log Creature that she should go and visit Wizard.

Log Creature waited patiently with the children on the grass by the side of the lake, while Dragon dived deep down into the depths of the water.

It was dark in
the icy
water but
Dragon
soon
found
her way
to the fort.

The door was
locked but she
remembered that Wizard always used to leave his spare
keys under the door mat.



Carefully, she lifted up the mossy mat and searched until finally she felt the cold, clinking keys.

She opened the door gingerly and peered inside. There was old Wizard fast asleep next to a roaring green fire. He woke with a sudden start! 'Dragon!' he gasped. 'I haven't seen you in almost one hundred years! Whatever are you doing here?'

Tearfully, Dragon started to tell Wizard that his fountain spell had worked. She knew that her eggs were about to hatch, but told him she couldn't remember where she had hidden them.

She had seen plenty of round and oval shapes in the park and the woods, but she wasn't sure how she would recognize her special eggs after all this time.

Wizard felt very sorry for Dragon and was sad that it had taken so many years for them to finally talk to one another again. He wanted to make it up to her by doing everything he could to help her find her eggs.

He gave Dragon a big hug and then they both said sorry to each other and promised never to fall out ever again!

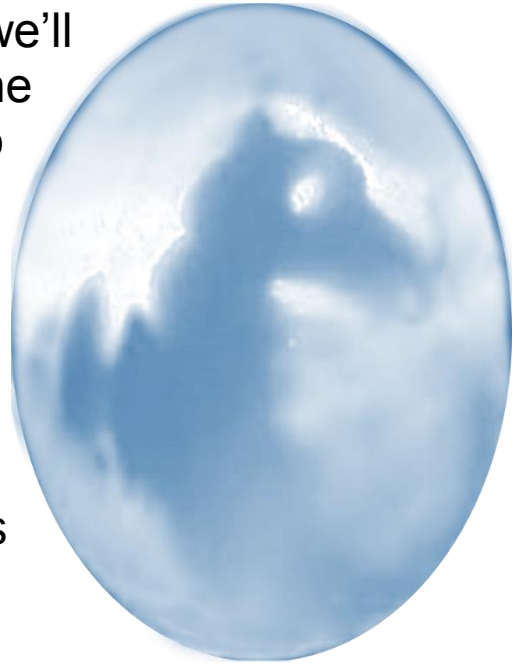
Just then, Wizard remembered a very special spell he had learnt in Wizard school, many thousands of years ago. It was a spell that turned things transparent, or see-through, and he was sure he could make it work.

He turned around three times, whispered some secret words that only wizards could understand, and then he waved his magic wand with the dragon's head handle.

There was a sudden rush of air. 'There!' said Wizard! 'Now your eggs will be see-through!'

“And when we find some eggs, we’ll know whether they are yours,” he said, “because we’ll be able to see if there are any baby dragons inside!”

Dragon opened her wing to let Wizard crouch inside, and then she flew them both up and out of the lake, high above the trees and then landed softly on the grass near the flower meadow, where Log Creature and the children were waiting.



Everyone was very pleased that Dragon and Wizard were friends once again, they didn’t like it when people were grumpy!

They carefully all made a plan for searching again for those eggs. If only Dragon could remember where they were!

They all agreed that they would now surely find the eggs by working together as a team. So they all set off once again, all the while singing their searching song:

*There’s a Dragon in the park who needs to find her eggs.
She swoops down to the earth with her scaly wings and legs.
She’s searching high and low, just wherever can they be?
Come and help her find them, you and me!*

At last, thanks to Wizard’s spell, the children, and their friends started to find the eggs. They were so excited - the baby dragons were curled up safely inside each one!

One of the children found an egg hidden in some long grass next to the bowling green, while Log Creature found the next one amongst the flowers in the wild flower meadow.



Wizard discovered one in a squirrel's dray, high up in a big tree on one of the islands – although he lost his yellow umbrella, which got caught on a branch as he was climbing up to collect the egg.

Soon all the eggs they had found were carefully carried back to Dragon.

The children gathered sticks and leaves, moss and feathers to help make the huge nest safe and comfy, all ready for the precious eggs.

Dragon carefully placed her eggs carefully in the nest counting them one by one – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. She did just wonder whether some were still missing - she never had been very clever at counting!

Then she settled herself gently on top of the eggs to keep them safe and warm and waited for them to hatch. Whilst Wizard wove a magic spell around them to protect them all and Log Creature stood guard.

Each day, the children came back to visit Dragon, to find out if her eggs had hatched yet. It seemed such a long time to wait!

Eventually, after a few days, there was a crackling sound from underneath Dragon.

One by one, the dragons started to hatch out! Soon there were eight little dragons stretching their wings and blinking their emerald green eyes at the bright sunlight.

The children were so excited to see the little baby dragons with their fragile wings and tiny claws.

Dragon herself, of course, was very proud of them all!

As the days and weeks passed, Wizard helped Dragon by telling the babies fantastic stories about the olden days when Dragon herself was young.



Sometimes he gave them rides in his huge sleeves or let them hide under his big, purple hat.

However, soon the day came when the baby dragons were old enough to learn to fly themselves. They practiced hard flying from one branch to another and soon they were ready to go off into the wide world to explore.

Wizard, Dragon, Log Creature and the children, all waved goodbye as the baby dragons gently



flapped their wings
and flew up,
up into the
sky, with a
sound like
fluttering butterflies.



Everywhere they visited after that, the young dragons would tell children the story of their mummy dragon and her eggs, and how her kind friends had all helped to find them.

They had all learned how important it is to help others and to always remember to be kind to everyone. They knew now that they shouldn't fall out with friends but should try and make friends again when things go wrong.

Wizard, Dragon and Log Creature were so grateful to the children for all they had done, they agreed to let the children play on them whenever they wanted to come to Lake Meadows again.

Log Creature invited them to climb on him, so he lumbered back to the flower meadow, settled down amongst the flowers and fell fast asleep.

Wizard waddled off to see if he could find where he had left his yellow umbrella. And Dragon said the children could climb on her back and tickle her ears, if they liked.

The children all went home for tea, to tell everyone about their adventure in the park with Dragon, Wizard and Log Creature ... although the grown-ups were not quite sure just exactly what to believe!



So that is the story of the Wizard and Dragon and her lost eggs, and of their friend Log Creature, who all came to live in our park.

Next time you visit the park, look out for Wizard's yellow umbrella high up in a tree, or even for some of Dragon's favourite popcorn that she might have dropped!

If you ever happen to find any of Dragon's missing blue eggs hidden anywhere, first check if you can see a baby dragon inside, but then be sure not to move them or they might suddenly start to hatch!

Just make sure that you whisper quietly in Dragon's ear and tell her where they are, so she knows that her remaining precious eggs are safe.

The End

*Now it is your turn to help.....
Here are some clues to help you
find the other eggs and Wizard's umbrella:*

*The umbrella is high up in a tree where Log Creature
can see it as he is dancing amongst the flowers*

*Three dragon's eggs are still hidden
somewhere in the park:*

*Log Creature guards one,
another is in the garden
where a child is looking at a snail,
and the third is hidden in the woods*

*Remember to whisper in
Dragon's ear to tell her where they are,
but keep it a secret from everyone else!*

*If you would like to write your own story about
Wizard, Dragon and Log Creature,
please send it to us at
secretary@lakemeadows.org.uk
or ring 07843 860 135
It could be included in a future storybook
about Wizard and Dragon*

The project to carve the statues from an old oak tree was initiated by the **Friends of Lake Meadows**. Local Billericay people gave a number of ideas for the topic, with the majority suggesting a wizard and a dragon.

The concept designs for the statues were created by local artist, **Hannah Clark** of Fable Faces.

The statues were sculpted by **Neil Bruce**, a talented local woodman, who also created the Gruffalo and friends at Thorndon Country Park. and subsequently sculpted a number of other Gruffalos commissioned by the Forestry Commission for forests around the UK, in celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Gruffalo stories by Julia Donaldson.

The story of Wizard and Dragon and their adventures at Lake Meadows was created by local children during two story-telling workshops led by **Colin Taylor**, a storyteller.

The final story, was developed by **Emily Jones**, a journalist, who grew up and went to school in Billericay and who also writes stories for children. The book was compiled by **Rosie Novis** with illustrations by **Peter Mills**

The Friends of Lake Meadows would like to thank everyone who has made the project possible, including

**Basildon Borough Council and their Parks' team,
Billericay Town Council**

and

Essex County Council Community Initiatives Fund
for believing in wizards and dragons and for funding the whole project.



www.lakemeadows.org.uk