

# The Kingdom of Arcadia

In the kingdom of Arcadia, everyone lives in fear of Asgoth the terrible.  
All except Jamie.

For Jamie has a secret weapon, Firefly the dragon.

If Jamie is brave enough to defeat the great wizard, the land of Arcadia could be free once more.

\*\*\*

“Bang!” The front door of the cottage shudders, almost giving way to the intruders.

“Run Jamie, run!” shouts Jamie’s mother, Anna.

Survival instincts bursting into action, Jamie sprints past the battered front door, through the dining room and into his bedroom. Hurriedly grabbing a rucksack from underneath his bed, he snatches clothes, a water bottle, and other various things from his bedroom, stuffing them into the rucksack as he runs. As he reaches the back door, he hears a smashing sound of splintering wood - the front door must have given way.

For a moment he stands in a trance, before shaking his head and running out the back door. Outside stands a horse, already saddled and laden with food. He jumps on the horse’s back and whistles. A moment later, a fiery shape swoops down to fly beside him. Looking back, he sees a troop of soldiers exit the back door. As he tugs on the reins, the horse begins to gallop, soon leaving the cottage in the dust.

He knows where his destination is, all those days of training and studying had paid off. For he was prepared, if he is going to the mountains of despair he must be, the mountains are full of twisted, evil, beings. Nightmares so terrifying that with one glance they could turn you to stone.

Jamie had been training. While other, normal children, were at school, Jamie was training, preparing himself for the day they would come. He knew they would come, they would come for Firefly, the last of her species to ever roam the earth. She was a dragon, a species of magic and mystery shrouded in the past. Glancing to his right, Jamie sees Firefly. The fiery golden dragon is flying at a casual pace, staying beside the horse. Looking ahead, dark mountain peaks catch Jamie's eye. Far above the clouds towered the peaks, reaching into the heavens.

Hours pass and the horse gallops onwards. Night comes and the strange group stops to rest.

Jamie wakes. It's far past dawn and birds are chirping loudly. He wakes Firefly and the horse and, yet again, they continue on their journey.

Finally, they reach the base of the mountains.

No birds are anywhere in sight, or, most likely no birds are anywhere near the mountains.

Jamie sets the horse free and begins his slow walk up the mountains. The ground is hard and pushes into Jamie's shoes as he walks. A dark shape moves in the burnt forest and Jamie spins around. Nothing. As Jamie trudges onwards he feels as if someone - or something - is watching him, but when he looks behind him he sees nothing.

Jamie doesn't know how he manages it, but finally he reaches the top of the mountain. Panting and out breath he collapses on a ridge. Soon after, a cloaked figure appears a short way below Jamie and starts to climb up to him. The figure reaches Jamie's vantage point and Jamie bows his head in a moment of respect.

"Hello, ... Steve."

"Hello Jamie."

A slight pause.

“Jamie, we don’t have much time. You will need to leave here at dawn tomorrow. Asgoth plans to start his plan then. He is going to destroy the villages.”

“Why?”

“He wishes to make a new land, one without the villagers. A land that he controls, a land that shows no hint of rebellion. Now come and I will train you.”

Jamie follows Steve down a narrow path and into a valley. “Wow.”

“This is where I live. It is a place of freedom, a safe haven for the creatures of this world.”

“I thought the mountains were a place of evil and darkness.”

“They are. Just not this valley.”

“What creatures live here?”

“All sorts. Dragons, unicorns, griffins, elves ( although many live in the villages or in the palace ) and much more. Now let me show you my house.”

Steve leads the way to a small hut. As they reach the house, a huge shadow swoops above their heads.

“What was that?”

“Thundercloud, my dragon.”

“You have a dragon?”

“Yes, all wizards have one.”

They walk through the door of Steve’s house. Steve sits down on a rug and motions for Jamie to do the same.

“Imagine yourself making something happen.”

“What?”

“I don't know. Levitate this apple.”

“OK.”

Jamie shuts his eyes and focuses on the apple, imagining it rising into the air. Opening his eyes, he sees the apple hovering in the air for a split second until falling.

“I did it!”

“Yes, you did. Now do it again.”

After half an hour of complete dedication Jamie completely masters the skill of levitation.

“Next I will teach you how to fight a wizard battle. You will need Firefly for this.”

Jamie fetched Firefly.

“Like before you will have to imagine yourself doing the feat.”

And so it went on...

The next morning Jamie wakes. He is ready. He fetches Firefly, says farewell to Steve and begins his journey down the mountain.

A tired Jamie reaches the base of the mountains. Practically dead from exhaustion he collapses on the ground. That's his mistake. While he sleeps a hideous being comes. It is one of the terrible nightmares from deep inside the mountains. A thousand tentacles cover the monster's body and wings sprout out of its side. Jagged teeth rim its mouth and massive claws line its feet. The monster drags Jamie and Firefly to its lair.

Jamie wakes. He knows something is wrong. As he looks up he sees the monster.

“Ahhhhhhhhh!” Petrified with fright he stumbles backwards.

His cry wakes Firefly. Firefly flies to Jamie and nuzzles his hand, comforting him. Taking deep breaths Jamie swallows his fear. As the monster lumbers towards Jamie, Jamie remembers Steve’s teaching. Raising his hands, he summons a lightning bolt and throws it at the monster. Usually magic like that would take years to learn, but Jamie has pure talent (not to mention lessons from one of the most powerful wizards of all time). The monster stumbles backwards and Jamie seizes his chance. Leaping forwards, he runs out of the cave, Firefly right behind him.

He doesn’t stop running until he is sure the cave is far behind him.

Night falls, yet still Jamie and Firefly walk on.

As dawn comes they see the base of the mountain.

They continue walking.

Firefly nudges Jamie and Jamie looks down. Firefly motions for him to climb onto her back. Tentatively, Jamie climbs on. To his surprise Firefly handles his weight easily. She takes off with surprising speed and Jamie clings tightly to her in fear of falling off.

It seems that the ride to Asgoth’s palace takes an eternity.

Firefly sets Jamie down in a narrow side street. The palace is an easy place to find. Its towering turrets reach far above the other buildings in the city. Jamie arrives at the large door and yells.

“My name is Jamie! I wish to challenge Asgoth the terrible!”

A guard falls over laughing.

“Are you serious, kid?”

“Yes!”

“I’ll go get Asgoth then.”

A few moments later Asgoth arrives, flanked by two guards.

Asgoth looks around his forties, but Jamie knows why. Asgoth has the magical pendant of life, a magical object that makes its bearer never age. He has striking blue eyes and neat black hair.

“Let the battle begin!”

Jamie conjures a golden lion, catching Asgoth by surprise. Asgoth summons a silver serpent that engages the lion in combat. Jamie brings a bolt of lightning down and Asgoth deflects it with a shimmering purple force field. Jamie levitates a pile of metal and hurls it at Asgoth. The pile of metal hits Asgoth and knocks him to the ground, burying him. Cautiously Jamie approaches it, not wanting to be caught off guard.

Asgoth is not defeated yet though. With a explosion of metal he rises and begins to attack Jamie. Their battle leads them to the chasm of death, a place near the city and said to be bottomless.

Asgoth creates a fireball and hurls it at Jamie. Jamie dodges it, runs forward and trips Asgoth up. Asgoth falls over and Firefly swoops down at him and pushes him into the chasm of death.

Asgoth’s cry echoes through the city.

The battle is over.

Jamie has won.

By Bobby Stannard, Island Bay School, Wellington

