

## Panic

Jane scurried along the long cold halls. Staring down at her tattered sneakers, she did not make eye contact with any of the other students. Quickly she shoved her bag in her grey locker after fiddling with the jammed lock. Jane grabbed her math book and made her way down the corridor. She pushed open the large doors leaving the seemingly endless halls behind her. Rushing across the fake grass, she slowed as she reached the winding staircase towards the dreaded classroom. Jane opened the wooden door and made her way to the back seat. Guilt wormed its way into her gut. Jane pushed the feeling of guilt aside and tried to focus on the teacher but all she could think about was 'it'. She was the only one who knew about the creature, shouldn't she do something?

"Jane?!" A feminine voice called out snapping Jane from her thoughts. She looked up and found Miss Stone staring at her crossly, "Jane that was the third time I called your name," She scribbled something in her book and sighed, exasperated.

"Sorry Miss Stone," Jane mumbled as her cheeks reddened. Miss Stone began blabbering about the point of listening and not daydreaming as she sat back down at the head desk. Jane slumped down in her seat as the other students all stared at her with laughing eyes. Jane opened her grid book and grabbed a blue pen. She felt a slight tremor and froze. She watched her hand intently as she rested the pen on the table. It moved slightly. Jane raised her eyebrow and lent closer to the desk. The earth tremored again.

'I really should have told someone about the creature', Jane thought as she watched Miss Stone jump out of her chair. Miss Stone then put a pale hand to the carpet and another tremor shot from the ground beneath them. Some of the students were screaming now but Jane couldn't get her body to respond. Her mouth moved in dreaded shock, and she finally got her legs to move her towards the large windows on the left wall of the classroom.

A large red creature rose from the Earth. Large clumps of dirt, clay and rock fell off its arched back and wings. It was larger than any natural animal that Jane had ever seen. Its large crimson wings must have had a wingspan of 50 metres at the bare minimum. It had a long tail that whipped around behind its snake like body. It had broad shoulders and a long neck leading to a more horse like head but with dark brown horns sprouting from the back of its skull. It also had more pointed nostrils and had neck spines running down all the way to its tails pointy end. Smoke rose from the creature's large nostrils and framed its face like a silvery veil. Its yellow eyes glowed unnaturally, and Jane felt herself gasp.

It was the dragon she had been tracking, the one she should have warned the city about. It let out an ear-piercing roar that shook the skyscrapers. It reached out one of its front paws and clenched its talons around the closest building. It threw it into the air and then blew red hot flames onto it. The building fell to the ground in a smouldering metallic blob. Smoke engulfed the school building and panic gripped Jane as she watched, unable to move.

Alarms were ringing and students ran for the oval. Jane stood, still too shocked to move. The dragon turned from the destruction and stared at her with its unnatural yellow eyes, it growled and stepped forward. Another tremor went off and a crack shot across the bitumen. Jane could finally move and ran out of the classroom. She jumped off the railing and fell with a thud on the hard concrete. She rolled to absorb the impact then jumped to her feet sprinting. Her heart hammered in her chest as she ran, she heard the dragon behind her.

Its wings pumped the air creating large wind currents that blew the roofs off the closest structures and buildings. Jane pumped her arms faster and could feel her legs tiring but the pure adrenaline pushed her on. The dragon was right behind her purposely playing with its prey. Jane was breathing hard now, and no one would help her. They just stood aside and

watched her run not willing to take on the mighty beast and the dragon didn't seem to want them...only Jane.

Tears streamed from her eyes burning her cheeks. The way before her was blurry. She couldn't see past her tears and the dark grey smoke. Heat burned across her back, and she turned to see fiery flames licking at the road. The dragon was breathing hot flames in her path and her exit! She saw that the people who moved out of her way were also screaming in panic and terror. She skidded to a halt leaving dark ash marks on the concrete and turned to the dragon.

It came to an abrupt stop. It beat it's wings hovering in the same place moving the smoke into swirling chalky grey clouds. It came down to rest on its legs. Jane stared at it, into its yellow eyes rimmed with grey smoke. She knew she was trembling; she knew all her instincts were fighting with her body telling her to run. The dragon rose up on its hind legs and arched it's wings and Jane knew it was now or never.

It roared with fury as she dashed under its large legs. It lashed its tail furiously connecting with the bitumen, spreading cracks across the ground. Fire spread across the road causing it to crumble. She felt the ground open up beneath her like hungry jaws and her last thought was, 'Why hadn't I told someone the dragon was coming?' and then everything was black, and she was gone.