About the story
Danny is a friendly, helpful dragon. All the villagers know him and like him. He cooks their food, lights their fires and candles, and wanders happily home to the woods each night. That is, until one day a stranger, Mr. Marvo, arrives in the village with his magic firesticks. They can light fires, cook food and light candles too. The villagers rush to buy the magic sticks and that evening, when Danny makes his rounds, there is nothing left for him to do. Dejected, Danny slinks back into the woods.

That very same evening, a group of robbers decide to storm the village, stealing candles and cooked food. When the villagers call for help, Mr. Marvo makes a hasty exit, but Danny hears their cries. He runs to the rescue, breathing flames to scare the robbers off, and is cheered by the villagers. They ask him to light their fires as he did before, and they make him a lovely kennel... out of Mr. Marvo’s now-unwanted fire sticks.

About the author
Russell Punter was born in Bedfordshire, England. When he was young, he enjoyed making up and illustrating his own stories. His ambition as a boy was to become a cartoonist. When he grew up, he studied art at college before becoming a graphic designer and writer. He has written over forty children’s books.

Key words
Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

- p2 villagers
- p3 salesman
- p4 tiny
- p5 morning [short for “good morning”]
- p10 lit
- p12 stranger
- p13 mobile
- p16 incredible
- p17 unbelievable
- p18 wonderful
- p19 amazed
- p32 noticed
- p33 smoke
- p34 cried [meaning “shouted”]
- p35 stormed
- p36 toasty
- p37 snatched
- p38 handy
- p41 charged
- p42 beards
- p43 toasted
- p45 burned
- p46 thankful

Key phrases
- p13 Roll up
- p20 as usual
- p41 Shall I..?
- p29 it was the same story
- p31 at that moment
- p34 Grub’s up! [meaning “Food’s ready!”]
- p35 snatched away
- p39 to run away
- p40 Save us!
- p42 set [something] on fire
- p45 to run off
- p47 to find another use for
Danny the Dragon • Teacher’s notes

Before reading
You could ask your students to tell you all they know about dragons. Write the key features on the board [e.g. breathe fire, can fly, fight knights, hoard gold, etc]. Are dragons usually friendly or scary?

Split the students into small groups and ask them to discuss how a dragon might be useful. For example, if they managed to tame a dragon, what would they ask it to do for them?

Introduce the idea that stories of dragons are usually set long ago. Ask the class to think about differences between modern life and life in the past. What did people not have, and what did they use instead? How might a dragon have been useful long ago? [If the topic of fire being needed for cooking, heat and light hasn’t come up yet, you could introduce it now.]

Show the front of the book to the class. Can they see what Danny the Dragon is doing here?

Reading or listening
You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.
P5 Can you imagine a dragon walking into a market today? How would people react if they didn’t know him?
P8 How could the villagers have lit their fires without a dragon? [Matches weren’t invented until 1826; fires were often kept alight all day]
P9 Which details in the picture show you how the villagers feel about Danny?
P11 Would you be tempted to buy some of Mr. Marvo’s magic fire sticks?
P18 What (or who) else can do all these things?
P25 How do you think Danny feels?
P30 Why does Danny try not to cry? Is he trying to be brave?
P35 Why do you think the robbers are storming the village? What do they want?
P39 Who do you think can help them?
P41 How would you describe Danny’s action? [He could have burned them to a crisp if he wanted to!]
P44 Do you think Danny is being mean?
P47 Does Danny look happy now?

After reading
Why do you think Danny likes his job? How does helping others make him feel? Would you like to live in Danny’s village?

Imagine if Danny didn’t come to the village one day and the villagers didn’t have any fire sticks. What would they do then? How else can people make fire without matches? In the old days, people might rub dry sticks together, use flints (a kind of stone) to make sparks, or carry a tinderbox (usually with a flint and some very fine, dry wood) – but it was hard work!

Did you know?
For centuries people thought dragons really existed, especially when massive ‘dragon’ bones were discovered. We now know that they were actually dinosaur bones.

There is a massive 3m (10ft) long lizard from Indonesia that’s known as a Komodo dragon. It has a forked tongue but no wings, and it can’t breathe out fire.

Dragons in Western mythology are usually fearsome monsters, but Chinese dragons (without wings) are associated with wisdom and good fortune.

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