THE DRAGON LORDS

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TEXT TYPE: Fiction: Narrative—Fantasy Story
GUIDED READING LEVEL: U

SUMMARY: Callore was once a land of peace; red dragons and humans lived in unity, until an evil Dragon Lord, Goran, started a war to gain power and control. Shadrel, a young prince, along with his friend, Thina, and a red dragon, Brand, must try to bring order to Callore while freeing his beloved guardians, Yemah and Licea, from Goran. After battles with Goran's Desert Men, encounters with vicious dragons, and a violent storm at sea, Shadrel rescues Yemah and Licea and is reunited with his father, King Briais. Father and son restore peace to Callore.

TEXT FEATURES
- chapters

TEXT SUPPORTS
- prologue outlining the history of events, setting, and characters in the book
- descriptive language
- sequential plot

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES
- elements of fantasy
- complex sentence structure
- use of the semicolon
- difficult vocabulary

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY
- predicting

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES
- inferring
- making connections: text to text

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES
- Ranking Ladder strategy
- discussing with a partner
- dramatic rereading of selected dialogue (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS
- language predictability: building a repertoire of language generalizations (e.g., possibilities for letter order in words and word order in sentences)
- language predictability: is developing awareness of how literary devices and sensory language convey meaning (e.g., simile)
- language predictability: is developing awareness of variety in adjective, verb, and adverb usage

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Observe each student's ability to:
- make predictions about characters and events and supporting evidence
- confirm or change predictions
- identify the main message of the text

ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Select from the following:
- Predicting Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

First Session (pages 3–19)

BEFORE READING

Activate and build prior knowledge

ESL NOTE: While reading, allow students to use a web to keep track of the characters and their relationship to each other.

Predicting and Making Connections: Text to Text

- Display the cover of the book and read the title. Ask students to predict what type of genre the book might be (fantasy) and provide evidence for their suggestions. Clear up any misconceptions students may have about the fantasy genre and provide appropriate examples. Distribute a copy of *Elements of Fantasy (The Dragon Lords)* BLM to students (please visit www.movingupwithliteracyplace.ca for a reproducible version). Read each of the elements listed and ensure students know what each term means. Explain to students that as they read the text, they are going to write about the different elements presented in the BLM and provide examples from the book to support their comments.

TEACHING TIP: Provide students with the opportunity to share any books they may have read from this genre, thereby ensuring text to text connections can be made.

Introduce supports and challenges

Predicting

- Some students may have trouble following the format of a fantasy text, particularly if they have not had much experience with the genre. Direct students to the first element, 'Setting,' on the BLM. As a group, predict some examples of setting (e.g., the time and place of the story) that might be found in a fantasy text like 'The Dragon Lords.' Ask students to record the information near the bullets under the 'Setting' heading. Explain to students that as they read, they will record examples from the story in the second column as evidence that might confirm their predictions.

Set a purpose for reading

Predicting

- Tell students they will be reading to see if their predictions about the story are correct for the first two chapters.

Provide for early finishers

- Any students who finish early can discuss with a partner the examples they used to complete the second column of the BLM section for examples of setting.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Encourage students to find appropriate examples regarding the setting of the story to support the general comments made about the setting of fantasy text. Students can complete the appropriate section of the BLM.

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the *Predicting Strategy Checklist* and the *Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide.*)

- Are students gathering evidence to support the predictions they made earlier? Are students pausing to see if their predictions will work out, or do adjustments need to be made?

AFTER READING

Predicting

Revisit the purpose for reading

- Share and discuss the evidence students found to support their predictions. If students felt the need to adjust their predictions, allow them the opportunity to share their new predictions and the evidence they used to readjust their thinking.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Your observations will help you work out challenges students have experienced so far. Discuss and clarify at this point, e.g., a word containing a prefix, e.g., 'empowered' (page 6).

Note successful strategy use

- Highlight a student who successfully reads the text, e.g., *On page 6, Taznim told me the entire second last paragraph was about setting. She said that the spring in FarNorth was similar to spring in the far north of Canada. I commented that maybe FarNorth of Callore was a real place, just like the far north of Canada was real. Taznim pointed out it could not be a real place because there were dragons in Callore. She said dragons are the kind of creatures you would find in the setting of a fantasy.*

You may wish to have students read the rest of the text independently. Set a purpose for reading and choose a date to come back together to discuss and work with the text using the Optional After Reading session (see page 7). It is recommended that you do some diagnostic work with students or hold a book discussion halfway through to check their comprehension of the text.

Predicting

Setting a Purpose

Work with students to complete the first column of the BLM, providing predictions about each of the elements listed as they apply to fantasy books and 'The Dragon Lords' in particular. Ask students to find evidence to the support their predictions and complete the second column of the BLM.

Second Session (pages 20–39)

Key events

- Ask students to retell what has happened so far in the story.

- As a group, look at the second element of fantasy, 'Characters,' listed on the BLM. From what they have read so far in the book, and from what they know of similar books, what kind of characters do students think they will find in a fantasy text like 'The Dragon Lords'? (characters that have special powers, animals and creatures that can act like humans, and so on) Fill in the first column with their predictions and ask students to look for supporting examples when they begin to read independently.

- Say, *At the end of chapter 2, Shadrel felt the magical rope wrap around his leg, he felt a surge of power through his body, and he blacked out. What do you think will happen to Shadrel next?*

Introduce supports and challenges

Language Predictability

- Direct students to the fifth paragraph on page 22. Read it as a group. What do students notice about the sentences? (variety of sentence length—some very short, some very long, quotation marks are used, use of commas) Remind them to pay attention to the punctuation, e.g., the number of commas in the last sentence, pause and think about what they are reading.

- As a group, read the first sentence in the second paragraph on page 24 ('Brand touched down in front of them as lightly as a feather on silk.'). Ask, *Can someone tell me what we call the comparison of two unlike objects or events, using 'like' or 'as'?* (simile) *Why do you think authors use similes in their writing?* Encourage students to look for other examples of similes as they continue reading the book.

Predicting

Set a purpose for reading

■ Tell students they will be reading to see if the prediction they made about what will happen to Shadrel is correct. Tell students to read independently, keeping in mind the purpose for reading. Assist any students who may be having difficulty with the reading because of sentence structures. Remind them of the importance of following the punctuation. Pausing to think about what they have read, as well as rereading, are appropriate strategies to suggest. Encourage students to complete the appropriate section of the BLM related to characters in fantasy text. Are students identifying similes as they read?

■ At the end of the session ask, *Was the prediction you made about Shadrel correct?* If students made a prediction that was incorrect, but was still logical and possible, be sure to commend students.

Third Session (pages 40–57)

Key events

■ Provide students with the opportunity to recall what they read in the previous session: Shadrel tells Thina about the magical bond between certain humans called Dragon Lords and dragons, and they met Cidrok, the oldest dragon alive. Shadrel is also reunited with his father, and they learn that a red dragon can be enslaved, his power stolen by gold.

Introduce supports and challenges

Inferring

■ Have students look at the third element of fantasy, 'Features,' on the BLM. Read the second paragraph on page 40. W*hat is being talked about here that is a feature of most fantasy texts?* (magic) Provide students with the opportunity to complete the bullets under this section of the BLM, citing examples of what they think are features of fantasy.

Set a purpose for reading

Predicting

■ Reread the last sentence on page 39. Ask students to predict what this will mean for the section they are about to read. Provide prompts, e.g., *On page 47, what do you think the creatures coming towards Brand, that look like bats, really are?*

Fourth Session (pages 58–83)

Key events

- Review what happened in the book during the last session. Say, *The last session ended with the sentence,* 'Then on the third day their luck ran out.' *What do you think this means? What do you think will happen next?*

- Say, T*he fourth element of fantasy we are going to be looking at is 'Theme.' What does the word 'theme' mean?* (main idea in a story) Allow students to discuss the idea that keeps coming up in the story (good versus evil). Ask, *Do you think most pieces of fantasy writing would have this theme?* Provide examples from other fantasy texts you have read, or that students may have read. Continue filling in the BLM for 'Theme.'

Introduce supports and challenges

Inferring: Visualizing

- Ask students to close their eyes and then read the second last paragraph on page 75 to them. As you read, ask them to create a picture in their minds of the island. When you have completed reading, ask students to describe the island to you in as much detail as possible. What words in the paragraph helped to create the mind picture? ('humid,' 'lush,' 'treetops,' 'richness of colour,' 'squawking madly') Encourage them to pay attention to the descriptive language as they visualize other parts in the book.

Language Predictability

- On chart paper or a whiteboard, write Brand's comment from page 62, 'I already thought of that, came the bleak reply.' Ask, *What does the word 'bleak' mean? What other words could the author have used instead of 'bleak.'* As a Ranking Ladder activity (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*) have partners determine some other appropriate word choices to effectively communicate the same meaning, e.g., 'dark,' 'dreary,' 'gloomy,' 'grim,' 'hopeless,' 'sad,' and so on. Have pairs share their top three choices with the larger group.

Set a purpose for reading

Predicting

- Read to determine if any of the students' predictions for this session's chapters are correct. Tell students to read independently, keeping in mind the purpose for reading. Provide prompts to students to aid in comprehension, e.g., *Which part of the text do you think is about the characters' luck running out? How do you think Shadrel and Thina will get off the ship?*

- Encourage students to complete the appropriate section of the BLM related to theme in fantasy text. At the end of the session, discuss how close the predictions were to actual events in the text.

- Review the examples students listed on the BLM as evidence of the theme of the story. Allow students to share the evidence they found in the story to support their ideas about the theme. Were the examples selected good choices? Why did students choose the examples they did?

Fifth Session (pages 84–112)

Key events

- Say, *The last session ended with Shadrel, Thina, Yemah, and Licea being led into Goran's castle, as captives. I want you to think about all that has happened in the story so far, including the predictions you have made. How do you think the book is going to end? How is the major problem going to be solved? What do you think will happen to all the characters?*

Introduce supports and challenges

Sequencing

- Direct students to the final section of the BLM: 'Plot.' Ask students what 'plot' means. Get them to discuss the plot of the story up to this point. Is the plot's sequential structure helpful to students in following the story? Based on the discussion, ask students to complete the 'Plot' areas on the BLM.

Set a purpose for reading

Predicting

- Are students monitoring the predictions they've made? What strategies are they using to do so? Where have their predictions worked out and where has author has chosen to do something different? At this point, students should be active in confirming their predictions or adjusting their thinking if needed. Ask, *Were the predictions you made at the beginning of the book correct? If you had to adjust your prediction(s) at the end, what were your reasons?* If students made a prediction that was incorrect, but was still logical and possible, be sure to commend them.

Optional After Reading

If students have completed the text independently, use the following After Reading Discussion and activity suggestions to support comprehension, word-solving, and good reader strategies.

Synthesizing

Imagine you are either Shadrel, Thina, or Brand. Write a diary entry about your adventure.

Evaluating

As a group, allow each student to share their favourite part of the book. Be sure students give reasons for their choices. What did they not like?

Self-monitoring

Ask each student to pick a new word in the book for which they were able to figure out the meaning. Ask the students to explain the strategies they used.

FOCUSED REREADING

Three options are provided for focused rereading in the next Guided Reading lesson. Choose an activity that meets the needs of your students, or you might select a Reader Response activity from the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

Predicting

- Students imagine they are writing a sequel to 'The Dragon Lords.' Explain the meaning of 'sequel' if needed. They should write a brief summary for the publisher describing what the book is going to be about. It must be interesting so the publisher will want to publish the book. The summary should be proofread by students using a posted guideline. The guideline could require three elements of fantasy (e.g., Setting, Characters, Plot) to be covered in the summary as well as effective use of verbs and adverbs, proper spelling (including names, places, and familiar words), and correct use of punctuation.

Artistic

Synthesizing

- Ask students to select their favourite settings from the book (e.g., the ship, Goran's castle). Students reread the part of the story containing the description of the setting. Ask students to draw a picture of the setting based on the language used to describe it. Next, ask them to write a descriptive paragraph about the setting, trying to use different descriptive words than the ones presented in the text.

Oral/dramatic

Synthesizing

- Ask students to choose a section of the text containing dialogue. Invite students to select roles and practise the dialogue of the selected characters. Encourage students to focus on the characters' voice and tone while reading. Allow students to perform the dialogue for others.