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Name _____

Blue Dragons

Do dragons exist today? Although often dismissed as a mythical creature, we actually live among several different types of “dragons.” For example, you may have seen a dragonfly hovering in a summer garden or read about a Komodo dragon lizard. The ocean has its share of dragons, too.

The blue dragon is a marine snail without a shell. It is commonly known as a blue sea slug. This particular species of marine snail can swallow a bubble of air (which it holds in its stomach) that enables it to float upside down on the surface of the ocean. The underside of the slug is blue, and its back is a grayish color. This helps to conceal it from birds flying overhead and from fish swimming below.

Blue dragons feed on poisonous man-of-war jellyfish and other similar species. When food is scarce, they will eat each other. They collect toxins from the jellyfish and store it in many finger-like structures. This ability to store poison gives them a much stronger sting than the jellyfish itself. They use this poison as a defense against predators. The sting can also be felt by people.

These creatures are rarely visible for study and observation except for when they approach land during times of onshore winds. They have been sighted in Hawaii and in tropical waters around the world. Beware of the blue dragon’s sting!

Text Questions

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph?
 - a. to give details about the topic
 - b. to introduce the subject
 - c. to introduce the author
 - d. to give examples of mythical monsters

2. What is the blue dragon’s main defense against predators?
 - a. It floats upside down in the water.
 - b. It stores poison and stings predators.
 - c. It feeds on poisonous jellyfish.
 - d. It moves to coastal waters during times of onshore winds.

3. What does the word *conceal* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a. discover
 - b. reveal
 - c. protect
 - d. hide

4. How does the coloring of the blue sea slug provide camouflage?
 - a. It floats right side up so the blue faces down in the water.
 - b. Its blue coloring makes it blend in with ocean waves.
 - c. The blue blends in with the ocean as seen from above, and the gray blends in with the ocean as seen from below.
 - d. It squirts blue poison into the water to conceal it from predators.

5. Why do you think this animal has the word *dragon* as part of its name?

Name _____

Walt Disney's Greatest Storyman

Sometimes we think more about how animation is created than the people behind the scenes. Bill Peet has written and illustrated over thirty books for children, and he is one of the major storytellers behind well-known animated movies.

Bill Peet began to develop his creative abilities at a young age. Peet grew up in Indianapolis, near the edge of the city, with access to the countryside. He also had the opportunity to visit his grandfather's farm, which bordered wilderness. Those experiences, combined with trips to the zoo, provided the foundation for future drawings of animals. When Peet entered school, his constant drawing sometimes became a problem, although one teacher encouraged his drawing. He dared to dream of a career in which he could put his drawing habit to use. He won a scholarship to an art school after high school and studied there for three years.

After art school, Peet needed to figure out a way to earn a living. He heard that Walt Disney was looking for

artists, so he moved to California. There, Peet sketched and planned screen stories. He eventually became a storyman. Animated movies are made up of many individual drawings. Peet did the complete storyboards for two movies, *The Sword in the Stone* and *101 Dalmatians*. He also worked on *Peter Pan*, *Dumbo*, and *The Jungle Book*.

Peet's children's stories began as bedtime stories for his sons. He illustrated his stories with many animals and some people, too. Peet claims the reason for this is he loves to draw animals.

Bill Peet used different media for his drawings. He drew in pastels, pencils, and ballpoint pen. He dabbled in oil painting for a brief time. Many of his book illustrations are done in colored pencils and ink.

Two of Peet's animated works won awards. He's more well-known, though, as "Walt Disney's Greatest Storyman."

Text Questions

- Based on the passage, which of the following movies did Bill Peet not work on?

a. <i>A Bug's Life</i>	c. <i>101 Dalmatians</i>
b. <i>Dumbo</i>	d. <i>The Jungle Book</i>
- What does the word *access* mean as it is used in the second paragraph?

a. able to approach	c. the ability to get to a place
b. a way of using something	d. to retrieve data from a computer
- What inspired Bill Peet's drawings of animals?

a. the countryside near his home	c. visits to the zoo
b. his grandfather's farm and wilderness	d. all of the above
- What characteristic might have contributed to Disney's acceptance of Peet as a main storyman?

a. his high-school drawings
b. his ability to write and illustrate stories
c. his growing up in the city
d. his oil paintings
- How can your passions and abilities relate to possible careers in the real world? Give examples to support your answer.

Name _____

The Perfect Princess

In a lost kingdom, in a castle that is now crumbled ruins, a young monarch sat on his throne. Since his father's death not too many weeks prior, he now had full responsibility for his people. The king's thoughts were consumed with only the needs of his peasants, and daily he grew more weary. His mother noticed the pallor in his cheeks and how his once sparkling eyes were dim.

"I must find him a wife," she said to herself. "Someone who can help shoulder his burdens."

She secretly sent her most trusted knights out to comb the lands for the perfect princess. A year passed, and her men returned with dismal reports of the fair maidens.

With the coming of winter, the queen set out on a journey of her own, revealing her true intentions to her son. Disguising herself as an old gypsy woman, she traveled to a kingdom across the sea. Enduring bitter

wind and snow, the ship finally made it to port, and the queen slowly found her way to the gates of the castle. However, after hearing her foreign accent, the guard sent her away. Day after day, the old woman returned to the castle until finally the princess insisted on allowing her to pass.

During this time, the queen caught a horrible cold. The princess took pity on her and patiently nursed the woman back to health. When the old woman's health was restored, the princess presented the queen with enough money to return to her homeland, sending her on her way with an escort on the fastest vessel. Upon her arrival home, the queen sent a messenger to the king of the kingdom across the sea, declaring her intentions: she wished her son to marry the princess who had treated her with such compassion. And so they were married, and together they ruled with a patience and kindness that had never been seen before.

Text Questions

1. What was the quality that convinced the queen that this princess should marry her son?
 - a. cleverness
 - b. compassion
 - c. impatience
 - d. wealth
2. When did the queen become ill?
 - a. when she had to assume responsibility for the peasants in the land
 - b. when she grew concerned about her son's health
 - c. when she was waiting to gain entrance into the foreign castle
 - d. when her son married the princess
3. What does the word *pallor* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a. paleness
 - b. illness
 - c. fearfulness
 - d. darkness
4. What happened when the queen decided to set out on a journey?
 - a. She revealed her intentions to her son.
 - b. She took several of her hand maidens along on the voyage.
 - c. She disguised herself as an old woman.
 - d. both a and c
5. Which fairy tale does this remind you of? Give reasons to support your answer.

Name _____

The Midnight Ride

Mom woke me before dawn, just as the roosters were starting to crow, so I could feed the chickens and do my other chores. For days, folks in town had been speculating about the British. Would there be fighting? From when and where would they come?

After a breakfast of oats, Pa and I went out to chop wood for the day. After Pa left for the silversmith shop, Mom and I worked on reading, ciphering, and writing. When that was done, I left to help the local minister of the Old North Church.

When I arrived at the church, I spotted several men whom I recognized as local leaders. These men, the “mechanics,” as they were known, spied on the British and gathered to share information among them. The talk of the British was getting serious. I did my best to listen and tried to understand.

The minister gave me two lanterns and a task. “Clean the glass as shiny as possible, and make sure they have

good wicks and plenty of oil.” Afterwards I carried them up, one by one, to the top of the church tower. I left some flint and papers to start a fire in case I needed to light them. But why? This made no sense to me.

Pa came by in a rush, leapt off his horse before it stopped, and gathered the men for a hurried meeting. “Stay here at the church tonight,” he said, then left.

After dark, I was reading by the fire when the minister scurried in. “Make haste to climb the ladder and stairs of the tower and light both lanterns.” I didn’t ask why but made my way to the top and lit both as bright as possible.

Soon after, I heard the pounding hooves of a horse as Pa raced through the countryside, letting his comrades along the way know that “the Regulars are on the move.”

Text Questions

- Which words relate specifically to the historical setting?
 - shiny, bright, light
 - church, tower, countryside
 - folks, minister, leaders
 - lantern, flint, wicks
- What did the mechanics do?
 - They worked in the silversmith shop.
 - They mended wagon wheels.
 - They spied on the British and shared information.
 - They worked on the British ships.
- What does it mean to say the townspeople were *speculating* about the British?
 - They were guessing what the British might do next.
 - They were pondering whether or not to join with the British.
 - They were taking part in the risky venture of spying on the British.
 - They were reflecting on the past history of the British.
- What significant event in history does this story retell?

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Boston Tea Party The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Boston Massacre The Stamp Act
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- Based on what you read, what is the role of the narrator of the story?
