

Peak Inside the  
Holiday House Press Clippings Archives to  
See the Original Reviews of

***THE RELUCTANT DRAGON***

by Kenneth Grahame

illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard



Original Publication Date: November 14, 1938

“ ‘The Reluctant Dragon’ by Kenneth Grahame is a typical Holiday House book: original in itself, perfect of its kind, and utterly charming. Has anybody ever pointed out that these books make ideal collectors’ items?”

—*Publisher’s Weekly*, 1938

“A rare combination of wit and imagination on the part of the author, humor on the part of the illustrator, together with outstanding format designed by Helen Gentry, make this a delightful edition of a popular fantasy.”

—*Booklist*, 1938

“With this intriguing triumvirate, Kenneth Grahame has given us a little classic; so march up, ladies and gentlemen, and procure your first editions . . . for we prophecy that they will become valuable.”

—*Boston Herald*, 1939

“It is a title for every child’s library. And a good many adults, if they do not already know him, will be delighted with his delectable dragon who had a kind heart. . . . It belongs wherever it finds a kindred spirit.”

—*Library Journal*, 1939



"The Reluctant Dragon," by Kenneth Grahame, illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard (*Holiday House*, \$1.25) was designed by Helen Gentry. It was set by Charles O'Brien, in 14-point Linotype Caslon Old Face; and printed on special Worthy 70-pound antique by William E. Rudge's Sons; and bound by Russell Rutter in Zeppelin Natural Finish.

"The Reluctant Dragon" by Kenneth Grahame is a typical *Holiday House* book: original in itself, perfect of its kind, and utterly charming. Has anybody ever pointed out that these books make ideal collectors' items?

Books which get Honorable Mention are illustrated here. The title page, above, was designed by Robert Josephy. Below, page 1 of "The Reluctant Dragon" (*Holiday House*), designed by Helen Gentry. Right, the beginning of "Hurry Hurry," designed by the publisher, William R. Scott



They knew that book-learning often came in useful at a pinch

LONG AGO—might have been hundreds of years ago—in a cottage half-way between an English village and the shoulder of the Downs a shepherd lived with his wife and their little son. Now the shepherd spent his days—and at certain times of the year his nights too—up on the wide ocean-bosom of the Downs, with only the sun and the stars and the sheep for company, and the friendly chattering world of men and women far out of sight and hearing. But his little son, when he wasn't helping his father, and often when he was

## This Dragon Was Not Fighting Kind

The Shepherd's little son had read many books about dragons, so when his father discovered that there was a dragon in the cave on the hillside where he took the sheep for grass, he wasn't a bit excited.

The boy went up to see the dragon and found him a very quiet, amiable sort of dragon who never wrecked gardens or frightened princesses or ate solitary travelers. In fact, he wanted to be left alone, for he was working on a sonnet and wanted to be quiet.

The dragon lived in the cave for a time very happily until his presence was discovered by the villagers and they sent for St. George. Things looked pretty serious, for St. George had never been known to lose a battle with a dragon and the boy didn't want his dragon friend hurt. This called for some quick thinking, but the boy managed it, and you will be surprised to learn what a reasonable man St. George was.

Children from 10 to 13 will enjoy this book, so different from the usual dragon story.

### The Reluctant Dragon

By Kenneth Grahame, Illustrated by Ernest Shepard (*Holiday House*, New York; \$1.25).

HOUSTON POST DEC 18 '38

Kenneth Grahame's delectable tale of the gentle, philosophical creature who happened to be a dragon, but was very reluctant to fight and didn't want to bother anybody, has become a children's classic since it first appeared as a chapter in *Dream Days*. Now *The Reluctant Dragon* appears in a separate edition (*Holiday House*) charmingly designed by Helen Gentry and illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard, who also did Mr. Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*. Neither children nor grown-ups will ever forget the story of the Boy who read lots of fairy tales, so wasn't surprised when a dragon turned up in the neighborhood—in fact, he became a fast friend of the scaly creature. This dragon was quiet and harmless, and, indeed, a very social sort of fellow, but dragons are supposed to be scourges, so St. George was sent for to fight him. The Boy arranged a friendly match between them in which nobody was hurt; St. George was awarded the decision, the dragon became a social success and the townsmen were happy.

DALLAS MORNING NEWS DEC 16 '38

Grahame, Kenneth. The reluctant dragon. 1938. unp. illus. Holiday House, \$1.25.

The reluctant dragon first appeared in the author's *Dream days*. The boy whose line was dragons and who in "a sandwich sort of way," read natural history and fairy tales with no special distinction between them, was not at all surprised to learn from his father that a real dragon was in the cave on the downs. The illustrations by E. H. Shepard have the delicate humor of the author, and the present edition, designed by Helen Gentry, is an extremely attractive book. Grades 4-6.

See Booklist 35: 143 Dec. 15 '38.

WISCONSIN LIB. BULLETIN

Feb 1939



St. George, the dragon-slayer, from "The Reluctant Dragon"

## The Reluctant Dragon

BY KENNETH GRAHAME  
(*Holiday House, New York*)

THERE is something about this dragon which is strangely reminiscent of Ferdinand. He is a friendly creature, of philosophical nature and finds the view quite satisfying from his cave high above the little village.

The Boy, son of peasants, who has spent his short life poring over amazing volumes of legend and fairy-tale, takes the dragon very much for granted and becomes his most loyal companion. When his peasant father comes dashing into the hut, exclaiming in breathless phrases and giving an incoherent description of the monster he has seen, the Boy closes his book, yawns, and says, "It's all right, father—don't you worry—it's only a dragon."

Then comes St. George, the noted dragon-slayer, and the villagers make up all manner of stories about their dragon's murderous deeds in their eagerness to promote a fight. But, the dragon tells the Boy he won't fight. Fighting just isn't his game, and he hasn't breathed fire for so many years he has almost forgotten how. He wants only to be accepted by the villagers and taken into society.

The Boy arranges everything. The natives have their anticipated fight—St. George proves his courage—and the dragon enters society.

The simple tale is designed for the entertainment of children, but serves admirably for the amusement of adults who appreciate irony and satire. —E. H.

DAYTON NEWS DEC 13 '38

Holiday House has also printed as a slightly larger book "The Reluctant Dragon," a chapter from Kenneth Grahame's "Dream Days," with new illustrations by Ernest Shepard.

NEW YORKER DEC 3 '38

The Reluctant Dragon —by Kenneth Grahame : *Holiday House*. New York : Illustrated.

Here is the tale of the Boy whose reading in natural history and fairy tales, "in a sandwich sort of way," quite prepared him for the discovery of a dragon up on the Downs, and the friendship which followed. And when St. George arrived to do battle with the beast, The Boy was able to arrange a match between his scaly friend and the Saint that was satisfactory to all concerned.

The Reluctant Dragon first appeared as a chapter in *Dream Days*. Ernest Shepard, well known illustrator of juvenile subjects does this number.

Kenneth Grahame, it will be recalled, is the author of 21st in the *Willows*.

AUSTIN DISPATCH DEC 8 '38



...THE RELUCTANT DRAGON by Kenneth Grahame, illustrated with sketches by Ernest H. Shepard (Holiday House, N.Y., \$1.25) is a very modern sophisticated children's book for all ages about the maligned peaceful Dragon living in a cave on an English hillside. The Dragon confided to a neighbouring Boy (an expert on Dragons from his wide reading) that actually he liked nothing better than to loll on the grass and recite his poetry aloud. The townspeople considered him the embodiment of evil and imported St. George to kill him. The boy, by hurried diplomatic manoeuvrings managed to satisfy the bloodthirsty townspeople, the pacifist dragon, and the Christian Saint. This delightfully told account, charming parents as well as children, recalls Milne's classic Winnie the Pooh stories. Of a half-dozen books chosen for "Book Clinic" awards, a monthly feature of a trade paper, HURRY, HURRY, and THE RELUCTANT DRAGON were both included, as among the best examples of book-design in December.

CHRISFIELD, MD. TIMES

JAN 20, 39.

also DARIEN, CONN. REVIEW

Grahame, Kenneth. The reluctant dragon; illus. by E. H. Shepard. 1938. [56p.] illus. Holiday house, \$1.25.

A rare combination of wit and imagination on the part of the author, humor on the part of the illustrator, together with outstanding format designed by Helen Gentry, make this a delightful edition of a popular fantasy. It was formerly a chapter in *Dream days*. For reading aloud, and for grades 4-6.

38-28954

ALA BOOKLIST DEC 15 1938

The book note below was published in the current issue of The Horn Book, and may be reprinted provided credit is given to HORN BOOK. JAN FEB 39



KENNETH GRAHAME *The Reluctant Dragon*

Illustrated by Ernest Shepard

Holiday House 1.25

Along with this little group of folk and fairy tale treasures, thanks should be given Holiday House for Kenneth Grahame's *The Reluctant Dragon* in a separate volume with Ernest Shepard's drawings. The shepherd and his wife in this story were very glad that their little boy liked to read books. "They knew that book-learning often came in useful at a pinch, in spite of what their neighbours said. What the boy chiefly dabbled in was natural history and fairy tales, and he just took

THE HORN BOOK MAGAZINE: BOOKS AND READING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE  
264 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON by Kenneth Grahame, a perfect story for Armistice Day.

STORY PARADE NOV 38

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON, by Kenneth Grahame (Holiday House. \$1.25). An engaging fantasy illustrated by Ernest Shepard.

STORY DEC 38

The Reluctant Dragon (56 pages).....\$1.25  
by Kenneth Grahame Holiday House  
Humorous fantasy concerning the dragon of St. George, being a chapter from this famous author's book *Dream Days*.

CHILD STUDY ASSOC. 1938

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON — Kenneth Grahame, Holiday House, N. Y., 1938, \$1.25.

A delightful story of a dragon who has survived to the present day only because his easygoing nature kept him out of prehistoric combat. Slightly unscientific but not more so than Alice in Wonderland. Its humor is in a similar vein. It is sensitive to nature, exciting and colorful and it has that deliciously quiet satire which will appeal to the adult long before it reaches the child. 8-10 years.

—CECILIA S. HADE

BULLETIN OF PARENTS & TEACHERS ASSOC. OF ETHICAL CULTURE SCHOOLS JAN 13 1939

RELUCTANT DRAGON. By Kenneth Grahame. Illustrated by Ernest Shepard. Holiday House: \$1.25.

First separate edition of this delightful story with special illustration by the artist who created the immortal drawings for WIND IN THE WILLOWS.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE  
NOV 13 '38

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON. By Kenneth Grahame. Holiday House. Fairy tale. \$1.25.

N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE  
NOV 27 '38

The Reluctant Dragon, by Kenneth Grahame. Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard. Holiday House. \$1.25. It is a delightful idea to present the story of the Reluctant Dragon, which appears as a chapter in *Dream Days*, in a book by itself, and still more delightful to have it illustrated by Ernest Shepard. The story is for those who have humor and imagination, and it tells of a shepherd's little son who grew friendly with a dragon that he found on the Downs. The dragon was a peace-loving one, "a lazy beggar" to quote himself, and it was only with difficulty that he could be persuaded to fight St. George. The pictures, from the first to the last, when St. George, the Dragon and the Boy go off arm in arm, are exactly right for the story. (All ages)

PARENTS MAGAZINE DEC '39

GRAHAME, KENNETH, 1859-1932

Reluctant dragon; il. by E. H. Shepard. Holiday 1938 \$1.25

"This inimitable story of the boy who knew about dragons and was not surprised to find one up on the Downs was first published as a chapter in *Dream days*." A. C. Moore

BEST BOOKS WILSON BULL. JAN 39

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON  
by KENNETH GRAHAME

Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard \$1.25  
The classic story of the boy whose "book-learning had taught him to understand such things as dragons." Holiday.

CHILDREN'S BOOK PARADE 1938

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON. By Kenneth Grahame. 12mo. New York: Holiday House. \$1.25.  
With illustrations by Ernest H. Shepard.

N.Y. TIMES DEC 4 '38