

# PLANET CARETAKERS



Story by Penelope Moon - Illustrations by Bill Stott



PART

ONE



...In which the child wakes again  
from a nightmare

Mum had tucked the child into bed with a kiss goodnight. She hoped that tonight would be a good night for no matter what she did she couldn't seem to stop his nightmares.

The child woke with a start, sweating and shaking, his head sore from its frequent banging on the wall.

Every night he banged his head in his dream, yet he never remembered why. He only remembered the feeling of dread that hung around him like a bad smell when he woke up.

"Mum," he shouted, and immediately she was there, stroking his head, soothing him with her gentle voice until he fell back to sleep again.

Tonight was different somehow; there was a strange feeling of comfort, as if this time at least, it would be better.

That black web of confusion seemed once again to be wrapping him in sticky threads, sucking him down into darkness, when suddenly he heard a kindly voice whispering his name.

...In which the child hears a kind voice that reminds  
him of his mother and meets the magical stag

The voice sounded like the wind sighing in the tree tops and made him think of happy times, sunshine and blue skies and playing in the woods near his home where Badger and Fox and Rabbit lived.

It filled him with hope and as the voice called his name again, he turned his head towards the window and saw a beautiful golden light shining through the curtains. His body felt paralysed by his dream and the window seemed to come closer and closer towards him.

The child had hoped every night that some kind friend might rescue him in his dreams. His nightmares that he could never remember made him so frightened that the strength of his fear itself called for kindly help.

“My dear child,” said the Stag, “I have come to save you from the fearsome darkness that has haunted your dreams. Climb quickly onto my back so that we can escape”.

And so it was that he clambered onto the Stag's broad back and held tightly as they galloped over hill and dale, faster and faster, until the sun finally sank over the horizon and the full moon began to rise in the velvety blue of the night sky.

Although the sun had gone, the golden light that the boy had first seen, still glowed making him feel warm and safe right through to his bones.





...In which the child and the stag go on an adventure  
and arrive in the land of the Moon

Finally the gentle rhythm of the Stag's flight rocked him to sleep, a better sleep than he had ever had before. He dreamed that they came to the edge of the Great Ocean and leapt onto the moonlit path that stretched up to the Moon. Higher and higher and faster and faster they galloped towards that silver ball that hung like a huge lantern in the night sky.



As they got nearer he realised that in fact it was not a ball but a hole in the roof of the sky. One final leap and they went through a lake of silver light landing on the grassy plain which surrounded it.

The boy looked around him in amazement. There were herds of unicorns grazing and playing, and dragons snoring gentle flames as they snuggled into their pile of treasure. Birds with wings of fire were pirouetting together as they chased each other across the sky. The whole of the land seemed to glimmer with shimmering silvery light and the boy gazed around him in wonder.



“We are in the Land of the Moon,” said the Stag in answer to the boy's unspoken question, “this is the Land where the creatures who no longer dwell on the Earth live happily and peacefully together.

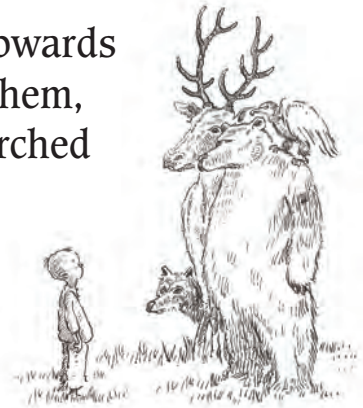
They remember us and their kind thoughts fall down in the moonlight to bring hope in the darkness. Watch and learn my dear child for there are mysteries here which only the heart can know.



## ...In which the child meets his new companions and hears of the Sacred Oath

After a while the Stag began to walk with the boy towards the forest. In the shadows of the trees, waiting for them, stood a great Black Bear, a huge White Wolf and perched on the branch of the old Oak Tree, a Golden Eagle.

“Welcome child,” they said, smiling at him. “Don’t be afraid of us for we are your companions here to help and guide you.”



Then the Stag spoke, “You have been chosen as one of the Caretakers of the Planet. For many years you have been troubled, and we have been watching you as you wrestled with your own dark spirit. Now the Ruler of this place has caused you to be brought here to take the Sacred Oath, if you so decide. Come with us now to the great Meeting Place. We are all your companions, creatures that live on Earth still but in fewer and fewer numbers. The Wild is a place of fear and fascination for humans who are working to control and destroy it on every side. As our numbers become smaller and smaller so we are more easily able to leap the moonlit bridge to this magical land to bring back the light to the Earth.”

They walked together through the Ancient Forest until they came to the clearing.

An extraordinary sight met the boy's eyes. Twelve large stones surrounded the circle in the centre of which was a large flat rock.

Behind this stood the Dragon, shimmering metallic lights and raising an eyebrow in greeting. Next to the Dragon was the Unicorn, horn glimmering pure moonlight and close by on the twisted root of the tree, which overlooked the clearing, stood the Phoenix with wings of fire.



The boy trembled a little but his companions bade him not to be afraid and to step forward. The Unicorn nodded for him to come over and stand on the rock. She spoke and her voice was sweet to the boy's ear,

reminding him of the first time he had heard the Stag and of his mother, all mixed up together making him feel warm and safe.

## ...In which the Unicorn and the Dragon help the child to look back at the Earth

You may not remember that there is much suffering on your beautiful Planet; the Earth herself is hurting. Men destroy the soil, the oceans, and the trees, the animals, as well as each other. It can no longer be permitted.

There are many beings on the planet like you who have taken the Sacred Oath and now it is time for you to decide, if you choose, to become a member of the Planet Caretakers.

First, there is something that I would like you to see. She nodded to the Dragon, who took a deep breath and within the plume of smoke the boy saw pictures appear. He saw men chopping and burning the forests and the creatures who were left homeless and dying.

He saw Badger and Rabbit who seemed to come almost close enough for him to touch, their eyes pleaded with him for help. He wept with sorrow for the plight of his friends. His tears dissolved away the image, leaving him only with the memory of Badger's smile that told his heart that they knew his tears were a promise of help.







### ...In which the Phoenix speaks to the child

The Unicorn smiled and nodded towards the Phoenix who opened his wings and in that dancing movement of the flames, appeared a city and then a group of children walking towards a park.

Even though the day was bright and sunny there seemed to be a dark cold shadow following them, which filled the boy with a dread of some nameless horror.





The children walked over to a thicket of trees. The air became thick with terror as one boy pulled a cat out of a bag, which had been hidden in his coat. The smell of fear became tangible as the boy watched. His heart was beating so loudly he thought he might die.

The black cloud became heavy, settling around the children completely. All the boy could hear was some cruel laughter and a horrible scream.

He found himself outside the thicket and saw the poor cat lying on the grass covered in blood.

He bent down and picked up the wounded animal and he began to cry. His tears of compassion began to heal the cat and the picture he was watching melted away as the Phoenix closed its wings.



...In which the Stag feels compassion for the child's sadness and the child is given a choice



The Unicorn smiled and nodded.

The Stag drew close, comforting the boy with the warmth of its body.

Its gentle eyes soothed the boy's sadness and reminded him that he had a friend.

“Now,” said the Unicorn, “do you choose to help relieve suffering to all the Earth's creatures? Do you choose to be a Planet Caretaker?”

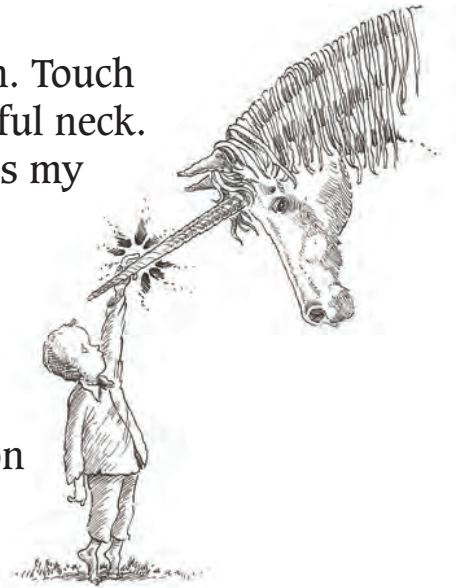
“Yes, I do” replied the boy through his tears.

“Then, it is time for you to take the Sacred Oath. Touch the tip of my horn,” she said, bowing her graceful neck.

“The silver light which flows into your fingers is my gift to you, it will sparkle within and heal everything that you touch.”

But first you may use it to sign your name to the Sacred Oath. Look beneath your feet.”

The boy stepped back and the mossy patterns on the stone began to take shape into letters, which glimmered with a strange green light.



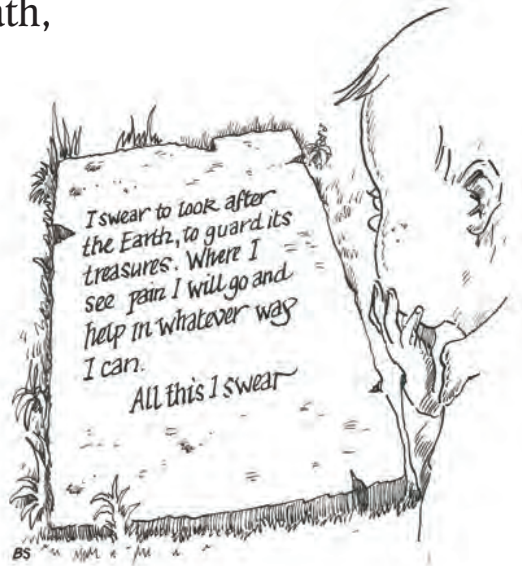
## ...In which the child makes a promise

The boy read the words of the Sacred Oath,

*“I swear to look after the Earth,  
to guard its treasures.*

*Where I see suffering and pain  
I will go and help  
in whatever way I can.*

*All this I swear.”*



He stood back, his heart racing with excitement. All his life he had been looking for something to believe in, his heart told him this was it!

The boy touched the stone with his sparkling finger and signed his name. It shone for all the world to see. He looked up and the Unicorn was smiling with him.

“We are pleased my child. You have done well. And now there are other gifts to help you with your task.”



...In which the dragon and the phoenix  
give the child a gift

Then the Dragon spoke,

“There is a treasure here for you. It will remind you that everywhere you look there is treasure. You will see it glittering in the trees and the flowers, in the eyes of the animals and the people you meet on your journey.





It will help you to remember that all life is precious and needs to be cherished. Take great care of this gift.”

“I will,” said the boy as he chose his gift from the treasure chest.

The child looked in amazement at the jewels, necklaces, pendants, bracelets of every colour.

There was so much there he did not know what to choose. “close your eyes” whispered the Dragon “put your hands into the chest and let your inner guide choose for you”. So he did.

Then the Phoenix spoke,

“Here is my gift for you,” with his beak he pulled a fiery feather from his breast.

“This magic feather is made from firelight. In this world, as you have seen, there are people who would deliberately or carelessly do harm. They may try to stop you in your work. This fire I give you for courage, use it wisely to confuse your enemies if you are in danger.

I will,” said the boy, as he took the feather. He looked at the feather which was like a living flame shimmering on his hand. He had never seen anything quite as beautiful. Then the Unicorn nodded to the Stag who once again came close to the boy.

...In which the unicorn talks to the child and tells him who will help when the companions return to Earth

“You have done well,” said the Unicorn, “Go now with our good wishes. We will watch over you through your adventures. Many are the creatures and humans that you will help. The joy and peace that you will receive despite the danger, will be your reward.”

The boy thanked them. Then he turned and climbed onto the Stag's broad back and they left the clearing accompanied by Bear, Wolf and Eagle.

As the companions walked together out of the woods and across the grassy plains towards the silver lake, the boy felt different, stronger and bigger somehow.



“Look in to the water my child,” said the Stag, “what do you see?”

“I see the Earth” he said “and if I look more closely I can see the Oceans and yes, Dolphins leaping and playing together. They are so beautiful.”



“Yes,” said the Unicorn, “they too are special creatures that can move between the worlds. You will find friends there too. Now what else can you see?” “I see Farthingwood, and there is Badger and Fox and Owl and all the animals. They seem to be frightened. Oh, look down there, it's me and you.”

PART

Two



...In which the child returns to the Earth and the Fox  
tells the companions of the danger

Suddenly they were there in the woods with all their animal friends.

“What's the matter Fox, why are all the animals upset?”

“We are so glad to see you all. The dark Shadow has been getting stronger causing much pain and suffering to our fellow creatures. As usual it finds its way through the weak points in the human race, sad and inadequate humans of all ages, some who are just careless and a few who are wilfully part of the Shadow that is intent on causing as much pain as possible. Even the dogs and cats have come out of the city to ask for our help and now you have come too. Stag, Bear, Wolf and Eagle, you have long been our friends, we know that you have been sent by The Great Ones and we thank them.”



## ...In which the animals try to escape and the stag saves the child

They all looked up as a Shadow covered the Moon.

“Flee, it is upon us,” screamed the little creatures.

“Wait,” called the Bear, “we stay together and so we will be stronger.

Sadly the call came too late, for the darkness swirled round in a foul tasting murk, filling the animals with such panic. Stag leapt away to save the boy, followed closely by the companions.

They struggled on, blinded by the black fog and stumbling over roots and brambles. Quickly they became separated and finally Stag stopped.



“Do not fear my child, it is me they want.” There was a stillness and a gathering and a focusing of the evil.

“It is I whom you seek.”

The Stag spoke loudly in the suffocating gloom.



There was hideous cackling as the darkness took shape into a huge spear, which drew back and then flew straight to the boy's heart.

With a leap the Stag placed himself between the boy and the spear which drove deep to the centre of the Stag's Great Heart.



The Stag fell dying and the darkness dispersed. A sigh of anguish seemed to be drawn from the Earth herself and the soft radiance of the Moon wrapped itself around the Stag's body.



The boy flung himself upon his dear Friend. "Don't die," he sobbed, "please don't leave me."

## ...In which the Stag gives the child the greatest gift

For a moment the Stag's eyes flickered and opened.

“Listen my dear, dear little one, and be comforted. This is the law; I have done what I came to do, just as you will. We all have a mission and I have reminded you of yours. My companions are now yours. The Bear will keep you warm and bring you the gift of timeliness. Eagle will give you the greater picture and Wolf will guide you through the wild places.

As for me, I have loved you since the beginning and to the end. That is my gift.

Look deep into my eyes and feel and remember my love so that whenever you see sadness and pain you will see with this depth of love and go to help. The darkness has gone for a time but it will gather again, such is the way of this place, darkness and light ebb and flow like the tides.

Now it is my time, watch and learn, for the mystery of life and death is a great story indeed. Your tears will melt away the pain. Never forget me. I love you.” With that he closed his eyes and died.





## ...In which the child hears the song for the Stag

Eagle lifted the inconsolable child from the body of his Friend and carried it to Bear who held him in her great warm embrace and rocked him and said, "Watch child.

Wolf started singing as a silvery reflection of the Stag floated from the body and up the moonlit path. All the animals sang Stag's love song, each remembering a kindness, a moment of listening or his gentle smile:

*"Touch me softly with your fingers  
Rock me gently in your smile  
Let your loving eyes caress me  
In their sweetness for a while."*

Stag's spirit paused for a moment to smile a farewell and turned and galloped through the silver lake into the Land of the Moon.



...In which the child goes on his next adventure  
with the companions

Bear held the boy close until his sobs had abated.

“There now child, there, all is well. Death is felt as a loss but indeed Spirit goes nowhere and its gifts are love. It is all a dream and you will only remember love as you have more dreams and adventures helping those who suffer. Wolf and Eagle and myself will accompany you never fear, but for now sleep and when you wake you will feel peaceful and happy. Your carers will be surprised at how you have changed and you will enjoy their delight.”

And you may awake now and see the world bright and clear, feeling happier, stronger and aware of your Sacred Oath, to help anywhere there is suffering. You will look on the world with love and act kindly. You are now a Planet Caretaker. So be it!





Dear Reader,

I hope you have enjoyed this book, there is a recording CD of the story which you can listen to before you go to sleep a couple of times a week. You will be surprised at what new ideas come from each time you listen-make sure a grown up has listened to it first and given permission

You are now a Planet Caretaker and if you like you can begin to create your own adventures

There are photo copiable sheets for:

a diary-to write one kind thing you did or thought today for the environment, an animal or a person

a dragon whose scales you can colour in each time you have done something kind and maybe you can reward yourself with a little treat when you have so many

The Sacred Oath sheet which you can sign and put on your wall to remember the promise you made

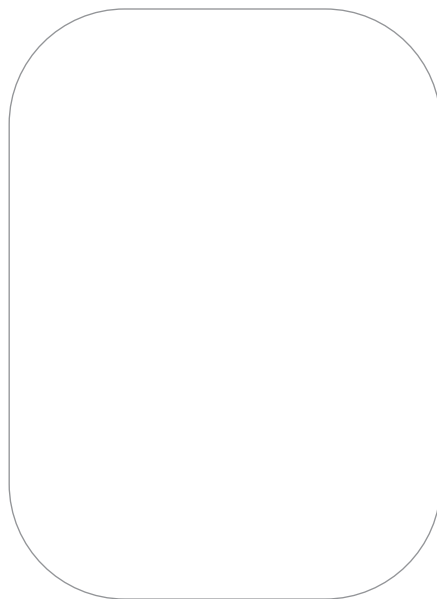
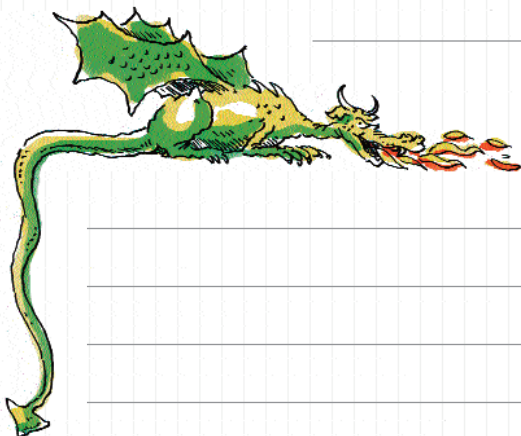
There is a workbook in case you want to do some work with a group of friends

**Happy adventuring as a Planet Caretaker**

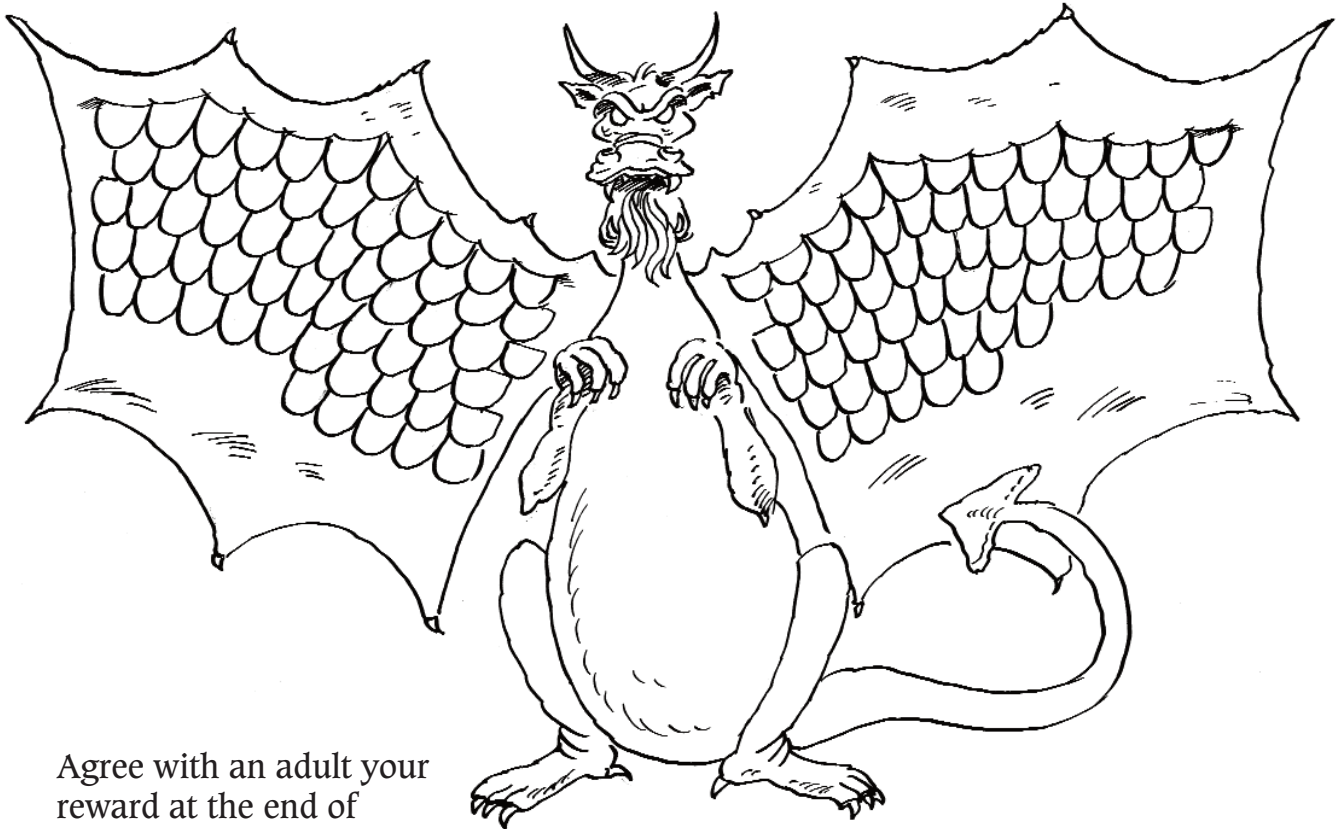
# DIARY SHEET

Today I...

Date



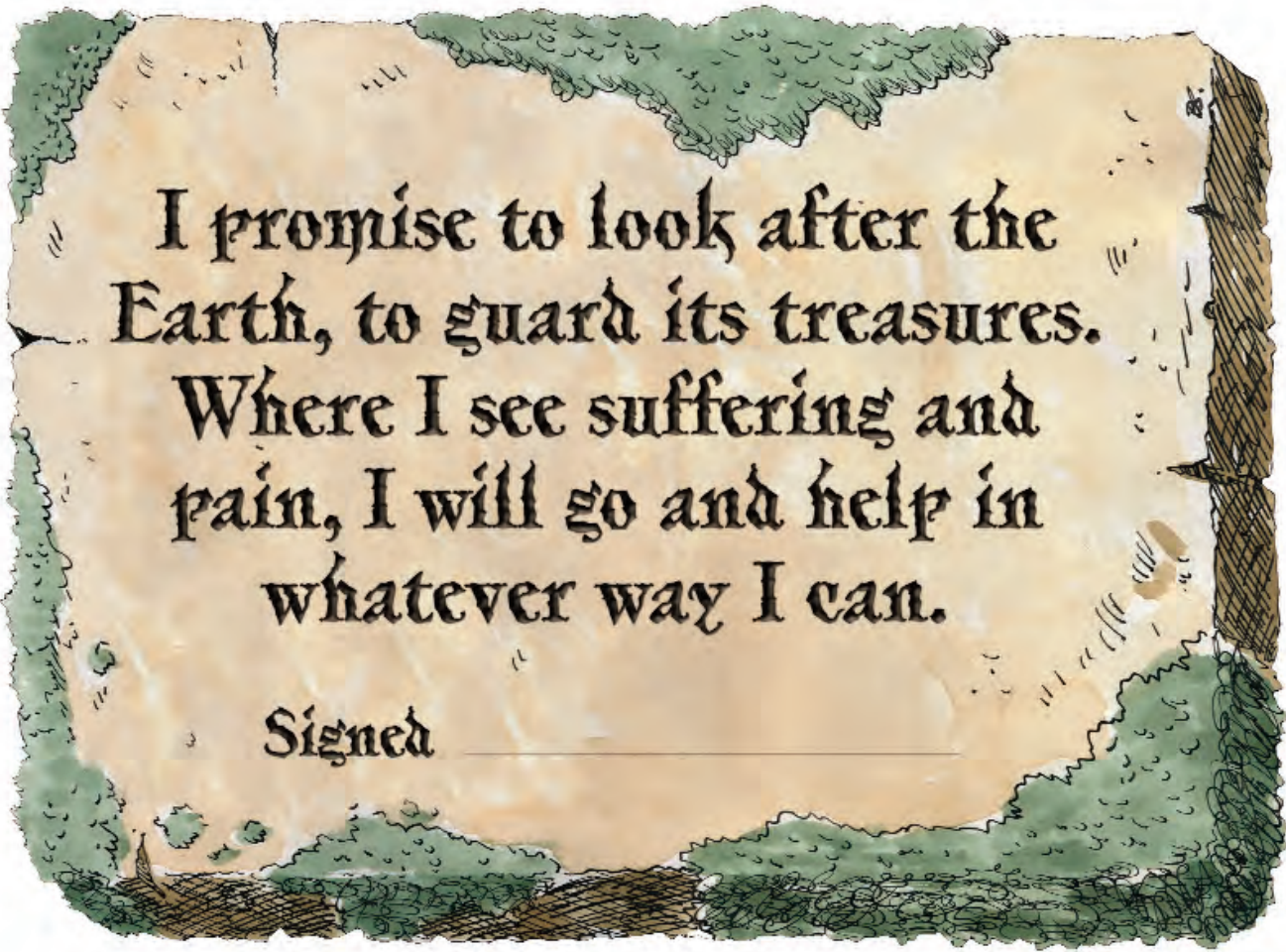
# Dragon Reward Card



Agree with an adult your  
reward at the end of  
the month.

Colour a scale in each day  
after discussion about the  
kind act or thought you had.

Reward.....



I promise to look after the  
Earth, to guard its treasures.  
Where I see suffering and  
pain, I will go and help in  
whatever way I can.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



# Introduction to workbook

## **Aims:**

This pack is a programme designed:

- To enhance morality and values through the development of compassion and respect.
- To develop spiritual intelligence by becoming aware of connectedness to all sentient beings.
- To promote kindness to all living things.

## **Who is it for?**

- Anyone of any age, differentiated material can be used across the age ranges.
- Specific children who have been identified as having harmed an animal.

## **Criteria for involvement of young people in the cohort:**

- Between the ages of 5 and 14
- Have been known to deliberately cause animals harm, either repeatedly or for longer periods of time
- There is good evidence that the reported events did take place
- Written permission from parents or carers for them to take part
- The experimental group must have access to a carer or support worker who can reliably carry through the programme on a day to day basis
- The control group may well comprise those who do not have such access

## **Objectives:**

To address these issues by looking at attitudes towards the treatment of animals.

To raise awareness of society and its general views about such matters.

To reflect on personal attitudes in these matters

There is a drastic increase in mental health problems in our society for both children and adults. Animals are a natural area of interest and education for many children. They can experience a range of feelings towards different animals from deep desire to nurture, to a massive fear and revulsion. This pack provides an opportunity to harness the interest that most children have in animals and develop empathy, caring and respect for all life.

Acting kindly is a sound base for positive relationships whether children or adults.

According to the RSPCA research September 2001- the issues of animal abuse are still prevalent across the social structures of our society. In a few this can lead to violence towards people in adult life and has been sensationally associated as a precursor with serial killers. Whilst much work has been done in this area in a generalised way, particularly in USA with Humane Society very little seems to have been directed to working therapeutically with individuals.

## **Individual use:**

If a child has been identified as having harmed an animal the pack must be used in conjunction with a parent or carer. Whilst it has been designed initially for younger children the materials and story are relevant to young people and adults of all ages. I would recommend that workers in this field use the recording as a basis for development of the metaphor with age appropriate language.

**Research programme:**

Before giving the child the pack it is important to do the attitudinal survey-a copy of this must be sent to Bob Spalding at The University of Liverpool. It must also be completed after the initial month and again three months later.

The child should be given the Unicorn Pack and open it with the adult in a peaceful atmosphere of interest and exploration.

It has been designed to engage with children and the initial moments will motivate further use of the materials. Young people could be engaged by being invited to comment on how they think children would respond. A reward e.g. cinema tickets, animal video could be offered for their efforts.

The pack should be used for at least a month. The CD can be listened to together and then it is recommended that the child should listen to it at least three times a week in bed before sleeping. The reason for this is that just before sleep we are highly suggestible and it will allow the unconscious mind to work in dream time painlessly.

**Additional suggestions:**

The local RSPCA will always visit schools to provide awareness raising sessions and some excellent worksheets to support the theme.

A visit to an animal farm is recommended BUT please make sure there are enough adults around to give complete protection to animals.

**Animals should never be used as a 'cure' for human behaviour difficulties-animals should be protected at all times from dangerous and cruel behaviour especially if there has been an individual history of such acts.**

**This pack contains a range of materials which need to be checked and listened to by the adult for suitability for individual children.**

CD and Diary are vital to the programme, the rest are optional.

**1. C.D.**

**It is vital for the adult to listen to the recording first.**

The story has been deliberately designed and developed as a metaphor that will address the unconscious mind without being judgmental. The language is stylised because it is intended to be listened to in a state of relaxation not as a cognitive adventure. The story is written in the book to be read to/with the children/young people.

This way of working aims to change the behaviour of the child/adult by developing 'rescuing' feelings towards other living beings.

The underlying belief system upon which this is built is that all human beings have compassion deep within and that it is possible to supply an opportunity for this to reveal itself even in the most harrowing of circumstances.

**2. The Diary** is to be completed daily-there are two parts:

- 'Today I ..... ' This is to be some kind act to child has done during the day to an animal or person as simple as smile, make a cup of tea anything-the truth is not relevant at this time-the purpose of this exercise is to get the child to start 'thinking' about 'acting kindly'-
- The rest of the page is left blank for the child to develop their own 'adventure' creative writing based on the Planet caretakers story. This can be done in conjunction with the adult or on their own-each day the story can develop of them rescuing and animal with the help of the 'gifts' and the 'companions'.

**3. The 'Dragon' card** is a reward card.

Discussion of rewards with regard to the topic can take place at the beginning without too much emphasis. Each day a scale can be coloured in after discussion with the child if there is some positive movement in their attitude-at the end of the month make sure that the 30 scales have been achieved and a mutual treat agreed at the beginning is planned.

e.g. a trip to the zoo, city farm, film about animal, Disney animal video bought(e.g. Lion King)

**4. The Promise card** can be signed after the story has been listened to, when the child is ready. It can be stuck on the wall as a reminder.

**5. Gifts.** Treasure Chest to decorate with treasures, silver pen and feather relevant to the story.

**6. Workbook** consists of photocopiable sheets applicable to different ages.

**7. Video and Play Script** for use with groups.

**8. The video** can be watched and used as a basis for discussion of these issues. The other materials can be used as and when appropriate.

At the end of the month please give the attitudinal survey again and if possible after a further 3 months. The University may wish to return after a year or more to see whether there is a lasting effect on the children.

**Addresses and web sites to visit.**  
**ADULTS PLEASE CHECK FIRST**

[www.RSPCA.org.uk](http://www.RSPCA.org.uk)

[www.SPCA.org.uk](http://www.SPCA.org.uk)

[www.hsus.com](http://www.hsus.com)

<http://pbskids.org/dragontales>