

Ansel's Adventure

It was a beautiful day on the colourful planet of Kye:ren. The birds were singing and the sky was blue, the grass was green and the sea was glistening at the Ginkan Port. The Septimus Ark was due to set off and the crew were loading cargo onto the ship. It was a large sailing boat with a golden dol:fin decorating the front. It had a deck at the back for steering and a crow's nest at the top of the magnificent sails. At the Ginkan Port there were several stalls selling food, pottery and all sorts of strange trinkets to ward off bad luck. Some of the sailors were buying these trinkets. Some were kissing their wives and children goodbye. Ansel took a last look at his home; he might not be back for years. The Ark set sail and, seeing his family and friends all waving goodbye, he wondered if this was such a good idea...

“Your first sea adventure aye, son?” Ansel’s father said, “Don’t feel bad; we’re coming back.” Ansel just nodded and went to his cabin. It was a small room, with bunk-beds and a tiny cupboard. He found it strange that he had two beds and no roommate but didn’t puzzle over it too long. He climbed up onto the top bunk and thought, did he really *want* to find treasure and make lots of money? Not really. Did he want to leave Jen and his mother at home worrying about them? No. But there was no turning back now. He went up-deck to try and spot dol:fins playing. It was windy and the blonde hair showing from his blue beanie blew around. The boat rocked violently as if it had crashed. One of the crew shouted, “Dear Godd! Mere-men are attacking! Defend yourselves!”

Ansel whipped round to see half fish-men climbing aboard. He pulled out his dagger and held it at arm’s length towards the nearest attacker. He couldn’t kill the creature. It may have attacked them but, as far as he could tell, his father and the crew were a form of pirates too. Ansel lowered his dagger and dropped it to the ground,

the mere-man diving back into the shimmering water. Some of the other ones escaped as well but many were killed. Lots of the men were injured too and the boat badly damaged. The *Ark* soldiered on for two more days, when they found a deserted island...

"Well here's an adventure for you, son," Ansel's father said, "Fancy exploring?" Ansel *didn't* fancy, but he didn't really have a choice in the matter. They found a cave after exploring for hours on end. It was dark and cold but Ansel's father insisted. "Are you sure, Medlon?" One of the crew asked, "There could be something really dangerous in there." "What are we, fishermen? No, we're pirates! Come on!" Medlon argued. The crew and Ansel reluctantly followed, looking out for telltale eyes glistening in the darkness. The tunnel opened out into a ballroom-sized cavern and it was glittering with gold, silver and all things valuable. All the crew's eyes shone and they ran, to grab as much as they could. Ansel, however, was drawn to a small doorway leading off the side of the treasury. He slipped inside and started at the contents of the tiny room. There was a baby Draggen no bigger than his hand. It was curled up in its sleep, snuffling every so often. Then he understood the treasure in the other room: Draggen treasure. He ran back into the Lair, but he was too late, the Mother of the Draggen was already there, and worse, his father and the crew were *attacking* her. "Stop!" Ansel shouted, "Please stop!" "We can't stop, lad," one of the crew said. "It attacked us!" said another. "That's because you're taking her treasure!" Ansel exclaimed, "Stop!" But Medlon took a swing at the beast and pierced its heart. "NO!" Ansel shouted. But she was dying, her mouth didn't move but she said in Ansel's head, "You are a Protector of Draggens. Look after my son..." her magnificent eyes closed and Ansel ran to the small room. "Son! Where are you going?!" his father called. The baby Draggen had woken in the commotion. "Come 'ere little buddy," Ansel whispered reaching out his hand. The Draggen scuttled up his arm and into his satchel. "Ryder..." Ansel muttered, "Your name can be Ryder."

They left the cave, the only one cheerful, Ansel's father, "Well we have one good story to tell. We got shipwrecked then slayed a Draggen!" "Shut your **very bad word** mouth, Medlon." One of the

crew snapped. "You just killed a perfectly innocent creature," Ansel muttered. Medlon sighed, "Well we'd better find some wood to fix the boat."

The crew fixed the *Ark* while Ansel sat, hidden from the others, playing with his new friend. He was already turning somersaults and spitting tiny flames. "Ansel!" Grecen called, "Come and help!" "Come on Ryder, back in the bag," Ansel whispered, Ryder doing so. "Coming!" Ansel replied. After they'd patched up the boat they set sail again, heading home. It was quiet on the return journey, no-one quite knowing what to say to each other. Ansel was playing with Ryder when they arrived back at the Port. "Ansel! We're home!" his father called. "Ryder..." Ansel started but the young Draggen refused to go in the satchel. Ansel sighed, "Well go invisible then." This was a power he had discovered a couple of days previously. Ryder obeyed his carer and was no longer visible. "Come on, Ansel! Hurry up!" his father called again. The two of them went up deck, longing to see the land Ansel called home. Once Medlon and Ansel emerged from below deck, the crowd at the Port square erupted with cheers. 'It's the treasure,' Ansel thought, 'Almost certainly.' Ryder, meanwhile had just learnt he could read minds. He heard Ansel's thoughts and checked with the rest of the crowd. 'Mostly...' he thought, 'Except those two... they're just happy they're home.' The young Draggen had not yet learnt how to keep his thoughts to himself once he had opened his mind to read others' thoughts, so Ansel heard, and looked at the empty space where Ryder was. 'Keep you mind *closed* Ryder,' was Ansel's response. "We are triumphant!" Medlon's booming voice called, "We have found what we first set off for. Gold! Silver! All the jewels you could ever want..." Medlon continued in his speech, for what felt like forever to Ansel and his new accomplice. He never mentioned Ryder's mother (Who was named Dawn according to Ryder), but did mention they had encountered a mighty Draggen. Ryder was obviously thinking the same, sad thoughts as Ansel, because he heard a down-hearted snuffle coming from his direction. The rest of the crew were now heading to their families. But not Medlon. No he was standing proudly on the patched-up *Septimus*

Ark, not bothering to go and find his wife and daughter. Ansel and Ryder set off down the gangplank, towards Jen and Ansel's mum. Ansel and his family hugged each other, never ever wanting to let go again. Ryder's mind slipped for a split second, and his camouflage scattered, so that he was visible to the whole of Ginka. Ansel quickly cupped his hands round the Draggen, but Jen and his mother had seen a glimpse of him. "Oh wow!" Jen whispered, sensibly, "A real life Draggen!" "Where..." Ansel's mother trailed off. "The mighty Draggen' is Ryder's mother, Dawn," Ansel explained softly, "But Dad didn't want the Draggen to take back the treasure..." Jen soothed Ryder, stroking him, while Ansel got a hug from his mum.

Medlon and the crew made a lot of money on the Draggen treasure. Ansel didn't care: he had his friend, the Draggen from the Crystal Caves...

THE END

by Rachel Clarke aged 11

