

*The Great Pterodactyl*, A Flash Fiction Story by Jean McGill

The kids taunted Malcolm at school, not only because he was the smallest boy in the class, but because of his crazy imagination. He believed in the impossible. Malcolm had a pet pterodactyl. It was just like the pterodactyls in the pterosaur exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History that the kids had seen on their class trip to the City. It was a giant flying lizard, only this pterodactyl lived in Brooklyn with Malcolm.

Of course, Malcolm's dinosaur could not stay in his apartment, even if pets were allowed. It was just way too big. With a forty-foot wide wingspan, even when it folded its giant wings, it was still bigger than a school bus. The pterodactyl lived on the rooftop of Malcolm's apartment building in a rundown neighborhood. Somehow from a hundred million years ago, this Pterodactyl ended up in Brooklyn. Actually, it found Malcolm and became a loving friend, helping him to navigate his way as a young boy, growing up in the center of the most crowded borough of New York City.

Now the kids were very jealous that Malcolm had a pet dinosaur, or at least that Malcolm 'believed' that he had one. Most of the kids didn't even have a pet dog in Brooklyn, let alone a pet dinosaur. And the more that Malcolm talked about his pterodactyl, the more envious they became. Malcolm would tell them how he flew over the Manhattan Bridge with his dinosaur, and how wonderful it was that they had soared over all the buildings in Brooklyn. Having a Pterodactyl, Malcolm said, was like having his own private plane. This made them even more outraged.

The big kids decided that they were going to beat up on Malcolm until he admitted he didn't have a dinosaur at all. So as Malcolm walked home from school one afternoon, the big kids surrounded him. There was no way Malcolm could defend himself as small as he was. All he could do was duck and make a run for it. Plowing through the boys like a football player, he put his head down and charged with all his

might. There were so many schoolboys that getting through them was a feat of magic in itself. Malcolm scurried through the crowd before they knew what happened. He ran along the sidewalk, barging through pedestrians and frantically bumping into parking meters.

It seemed like more boys kept joining the chase. They were coming from every direction, running after Malcolm. He could hear them shouting, getting louder as they neared. “Dragon Boy,” they chanted. “Where’s your dragon?”

Malcolm was out of breath. He ran until he couldn’t run anymore. He collapsed and fell on his face. Suddenly a wind stirred. A huge shadow billowed like smoke. The bullies screeched to a halt. They screamed and scattered like mice. Malcolm looked behind and grasped the wings of the great pterodactyl.