**The Dragons are Hiding**  
  
To be born a dragon hunter

is somehow to know, that once,

a very long time ago, dragons

were not just the stuff of dreams.

It was a way for young men

to fulfill their destinies, to ride off

on horseback, seeking treasure,

It was, first and foremost,

a measure of their courage,

the best sort of quest.

It was a solitary pursuit, one to one,

hunter and hunted, the odds even.

Sharp eyes, cunning and surprise

all counted, for a lick of flame

would be all it took to paralyse.

Dragons knew they were young men's’

quarry, they became elusive, led

secluded lives, slept by day, fed

at night, easily fled when challenged.

Then down the years, dragons

disappeared. there were tales

of course, a mountain in Scotland,

a labyrinth in Wales, but the trails

proved cold; no smoke-blackened

caves, no burnt out villages,

no graves of would -be dragon

hunters.

Yet recently there were rumours again:

The whisper of wing-beats in darkness,

distant thunder from mountains,

a tumult beneath a waterfall where roaring

could easily be disguised.

Any young warrior out seeking dragons

should look again, in slate caverns

and abandoned mine shafts.

They should travel to the hidden sides

of mountains, look beneath Devils’

bridges and dig down to discover

the silent secret spaces

where dragons might be waking.

For in a darkening Welsh landscape

with evening purpling the hills,

it is easy, so easy to believe

how those of us who would be

dragon hunters, could one day

find them again.

*Brian Moses*

**The dragons are hiding**

**VOCABULARY FOCUS**

1. “It was a way for young men to fulfil their destinies”. Choose the word which is closest in meaning to ‘fulfil’…

***learn about change attempt complete***

1. “It was a solitary pursuit”. What does this tell you about the men who set off to find dragons?
2. Look at the second verse. Find and copy the word in this verse which could be replaced with the synonym ‘cleverness’.
3. What does the phrase, “the trails proved cold” tell you about dragons? Choose one:
   * They hid in cold places.
   * No-one could find them.
   * No-one tried to find them.
   * There was proof they existed.
4. Find and copy a word or phrase which suggests dragons lived alone.

**INFERENCE FOCUS**

1. The poet describes how the dragons “easily fled when challenged”. What does this suggest about the dragons?
2. Why might a dragon hide beneath a waterfall?
3. Look at the verse beginning, “It was a solitary pursuit…”. Give 2 examples of evidence which shows dragons could be dangerous.
4. Based on the poem, do you think dragons could be found again? Use evidence to explain your answer.

**SUMMARISING FOCUS**

1. Below are summaries of some verses from the poem. Put them in the order in which they appear:
   * The narrator gives advice to young dragon hunters \_\_\_\_
   * The countryside makes the narrator think about dragons \_\_\_\_
   * The narrator introduces the idea of dragon hunters \_\_\_\_
   * Signs of dragons have been reported again \_\_\_\_
   * The narrator describes what it was like to hunt dragons \_\_\_\_\_

**RETRIEVAL FOCUS**

1. Years ago, how did most dragon hunters travel on their quests?
2. What three qualities does the poet suggest a dragon hunter needed to be successful?
3. What did dragons do in day and at night?
4. Where is it suggested that dragon hunters **should** look to find them now?

**ANSWERS The dragons are hiding**

**VOCABULARY FOCUS**

1. “It was a way for young men to fulfil their destinies”.  Choose the word which is closest in meaning to ‘fulfil’…

***learn about                  change                  attempt                complete***

1. “It was a solitary pursuit”.  What does this tell you about the men who set off to find dragons?

Solitary means being alone so dragon hunter went off by themselves – they had no companions.

1. Look at the second verse.  Find and copy the word in this verse which could be replaced with the synonym ‘cleverness’.

Cunning

1. What does the phrase, “the trails proved cold” tell you about dragons? Choose one:

* They hid in cold places.
* No-one could find them.
* No-one tried to find them.
* There was proof they existed.

1. Find and copy a word or phrase which suggests dragons lived alone.

They led secluded lives

**INFERENCE FOCUS**

1. The poet describes how the dragons “easily fled when challenged”.  What does this suggest about the dragons?

They weren’t as fierce as imagined – perhaps they were fearful of the dragon hunters.

1. Why might a dragon hide beneath a waterfall?

The noise of the rushing water could disguise the roar of the dragon.

1. Look at the verse beginning, “It was a solitary pursuit…”.  Give 2 examples of evidence which shows dragons could be dangerous.
2. The odds even (hunter and hunted were both dangerous.
3. ‘a lick of flame would be all it took to paralyse.’

1. Based on the poem, do you think dragons could be found again?  Use evidence to explain your answer.

Yes – dragons are elusive, sleep by day and there have been rumours of ‘wing-beats’ in darkness, thunder from the mountains.  There are still hiding places where dragons could be – ‘silent secret spaces’

NO – dragons disappeared.   Trails have grown cold and there is no evidence: no smoke-blackened caves, no burnt out villages, no graves of dragon-hunters.

**SUMMARISING FOCUS**

1. Below are summaries of some verses from the poem.  Put them in the order in which they appear:

* The narrator gives advice to young dragon hunters \_4\_\_\_
* The countryside makes the narrator think about dragons \_\_\_\_5
* The narrator introduces the idea of dragon hunters \_1\_\_\_
* Signs of dragons have been reported again \_3\_\_\_
* The narrator describes what it was like to hunt dragons \_\_\_2\_\_

**RETRIEVAL FOCUS**

1. Years ago, how did most dragon hunters travel on their quests?

Horseback

1. What three qualities does the poet suggest a dragon hunter needed to be successful?

Sharp eyes, cunning and surprise

1. What did dragons do in day and at night?

They slept by day and fed at night

1. Where is it suggested that dragon hunters **should** look to find them now?

In slate caverns, abandoned mine shafts. Hidden sides of mountains, beneath Devil’s bridges and dig down to discover silent secret spaces.