

75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION

# MY FATHER'S DRAGON



By **RUTH STILES GANNETT**  
Illustrated by **RUTH CHRISMAN GANNETT**

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STORY BY  
**RUTH STILES GANNETT**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
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PURPLE HOUSE PRESS  KENTUCKY



For Grant, Sarah, and Audrey,  
with love

Published by  
Purple House Press  
PO Box 787  
Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031

Classic Books for Kids and Young Adults  
[purplehousepress.com](http://purplehousepress.com)

Written by Ruth Stiles Gannett in 1948  
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Summary: A young boy decides to rescue a poor baby dragon who is being used to ferry a group of lazy wild animals across the river on Wild Island.

ISBN 9798888180372 paperback  
ISBN 9798888180389 hardcover



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MAP OF THE ISLAND OF TANGERINA AND WILD ISLAND



wild tangerine trees grew all over the island

OCEAN ROCKS

my father got here late in the afternoon and waited for dark

my father slept under this tangerine tree



my father met a fisherman who was too scared even to think about Wild Island

my father slept on this point and saw the rocks the next morning



river begins here

my father doesn't know what's on this side of the island

sleeping whale snoring

tangerine peels

clump of tall grass where my father slept and left more tangerine peels

my father talked to a pair of tortoises



my father nearly walked right between two wild boars

this is all very thick jungle

my father comes to the river and decides to go along the bank



## Chapter One

### MY FATHER MEETS THE CAT

One cold rainy day when my father was a little boy, he met an old alley cat on his street. The cat was very drippy and uncomfortable so my father said, “Wouldn’t you like to come home with me?”

This surprised the cat—she had never before met anyone who cared about old alley cats—but she said, “I’d be very much obliged if I could sit by a warm furnace, and perhaps have a saucer of milk.”

“We have a very nice furnace to sit by,” said my father, “and I’m sure my mother has an extra saucer of milk.”

My father and the cat became good friends but my father’s mother was very upset about the cat. She hated



## *Chapter Two*

### **MY FATHER RUNS AWAY**

“Wild Island is practically cut in two by a very wide and muddy river,” continued the cat. “This river begins near one end of the island and flows into the ocean at the other. Now the animals there are very lazy, and they used to hate having to go all the way around the beginning of this river to get to the other

## Chapter Three

### MY FATHER FINDS THE ISLAND

My father hid in the hold for six days and nights. Twice he was nearly caught when the ship stopped to take on more cargo. But at last he heard a sailor say that the next port would be Cranberry and that they'd be unloading the wheat there. My father knew that the sailors would send him home if they caught him, so he looked in his knapsack and took out a rubber band and the empty grain bag with the label saying "Cranberry." At the last moment my father got inside the bag, knapsack and all, folded the top of the bag inside, and put the rubber band around the top. He didn't look just exactly like the other bags but it was the best he could do.





## *Chapter Five*

### **MY FATHER MEETS SOME TIGERS**

The river was very wide and muddy, and the jungle was very gloomy and dense. The trees grew close to each other, and what room there was between them was taken up by great high ferns with sticky leaves. My father hated to leave the beach, but he decided to start along the river bank where at least the jungle wasn't quite so thick. He ate three tangerines, making sure to keep all the peels this time, and put on his rubber boots.

My father tried to follow the river bank but it was very swampy, and as he went farther the swamp became deeper. When it was almost as deep as his boot tops he got stuck in the oozy, mucky mud. My father tugged and tugged, and nearly pulled his boots right

“And we’re very hungry right now. In fact, I can hardly wait,” said the sixth.

“I *can’t* wait!” said the seventh tiger.



And then all the tigers said together in a loud roar, “Let’s begin right now!” and they moved in closer.

My father looked at those seven hungry tigers, and then he had an idea. He quickly opened his knapsack and took out the chewing gum. The cat had told him that tigers were especially fond of chewing gum,

which was very scarce on the island. So he threw them each a piece but they only growled, “As fond as we are of chewing gum, we’re sure we’d like you even better!” and they moved so close that he could feel them breathing on his face.

“But this is very special chewing gum,” said my father. “If you keep on chewing it long enough it will turn green, and then if you plant it, it will grow more chewing gum, and the sooner you start chewing the sooner you’ll have more.”

The tigers said, “Why, you don’t say! Isn’t that fine!” And as each one wanted to be the first to plant the chewing gum, they all unwrapped their pieces and began chewing as hard as they could. Every once in a while one tiger would look into another’s mouth and say, “Nope, it’s not done yet,” until finally they were all so busy looking into each other’s mouths to make sure that no one was getting ahead that they forgot all about my father.



## *Chapter Eight*

### **MY FATHER MEETS A GORILLA**

My father was very hungry so he sat down under a baby banyan tree on the side of the trail and ate four tangerines. He wanted to eat eight or ten, but he had only thirteen left and it might be a long time before he could get more. He packed away all the peels and was about to get up when he heard the familiar voices of the boars.

“I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen them with my own eyes, but wait and see for yourself. All the tigers are sitting around chewing gum to beat the band. Old Rhinoceros is so busy brushing his tusk that he doesn’t even look around to see who’s going by, and they’re all so busy they won’t even talk to me!”



“Oh, no thank you,” said my father. “I never swim after sundown, but I do have something sweet to offer you. Perhaps you’d like a lollipop, and perhaps you have friends who would like lollipops, too?”

“Lollipops!” said the crocodile. “Why, that is a treat! How about it, boys?”

A whole chorus of voices shouted, “Hurrah! Lollipops!” and my father counted as many as seventeen crocodiles with their heads just peeping out of the water.

“That’s fine,” said my father as he got out the two dozen pink lollipops and the rubber bands. “I’ll stick one here in the bank. Lollipops last longer if you keep them out of the water, you know. Now, one of you can have this one.”

The crocodile who had first spoken swam up and tasted it. “Delicious, mighty delicious!” he said.

“Now if you don’t mind,” said my father, “I’ll just walk along your back and fasten another lollipop to the

