

Science Connection

Dragon's Milk

In our story, Mr. Tabby had a recipe for a concoction he called Artificial Dragon's Milk. It's a recipe he perfected over the years to give to young dragons when no fresh meat was available. But dragons are supposed to be reptiles, right? And reptiles don't drink milk, do they? So why did the baby wyvern drink milk?

Reptiles include snakes, lizards, turtles, tortoises, alligators, crocodiles, and the extinct dinosaurs.

Reptiles are cold-blooded animals. This means that they have to rely on the outside world to heat or cool their bodies. So if a reptile wants to get warm, it lies in the sun. If it wants to cool down, it hides under a rock or floats in the water. Reptile bodies do not maintain a consistent temperature the way mammal bodies do.

Reptiles have scales (snakes), shields (tortoises), or plates (crocodiles) covering their bodies. And all baby reptiles are hatched from eggs. Most of the time, the eggs are laid, but in a few cases, such as with the garter snake, the egg is kept inside the mother's body until it hatches, and then the baby snake emerges.

So why don't reptiles drink milk?

Milk comes from mammals. Baby mammals are not able to take care of themselves when they are born. They would die without a mother or father to feed them. So a mother mammal makes milk, which she feeds to her baby.

But baby reptiles are independent the moment they are born. This means they slither or crawl or swim away from their parents and seek food on their own. A mother or father reptile does not need to provide food. How much easier it is to be a reptile parent—once the kids are hatched, you're free!

So back to the question, why did the baby wyvern drink milk? Dragons are reptiles, but they are also magical creatures, so the regular rules don't apply to them. This is why a baby dragon might drink milk—or else it might eat your neighbor!

Story Ideas

1. Imagine two mothers, a snake mother and a squirrel mother, are sitting in the garden talking about their babies. How are their lives different?

2. Imagine you are a baby dragon, just emerging from the shell. What does it feel like to break through the shell? What does your world look like? What is the first thing you do?