

**1st Grade Curriculum Guide Book Summary**

**Book title: *The Tears of the Dragon***

**Author:** Hirosuke Hamada

**Main characters:** Akito, Akito’s mother, the dragon, and the other people in the village

**Executive summary:** A young boy, named Akito, sees the good inside a dragon that others in his village have feared for generations. Akito’s kindness transforms the dragon, once thought to be a monster, into something that the people love and enjoy.

**Detailed summary:**  In a land far away in Japan there was a village, where the people lived in fear of a dragon who lived in the mountains. He was said to be a monster, with fierce eyes and a huge mouth, who would breathe fire and smoke. Though no one had actually seen the dragon, they told tales of how the dragon would snatch naughty children. Because these tales that were passed on from generation to generation, the people in the village all feared the dragon.

One day a young boy, named Akito, asked questions about the dragon, as if he didn’t believe all the stories. The people of the village thought he was a bad child for doubting the stories of the evil dragon. One night Akito’s mother heard him crying. Akito said he was crying for the dragon. He wasn’t afraid of the dragon, he felt sorry for the dragon because everyone told such scary stories about him even though they had never seen nor met him. Akito’s mother, who was told the same stories, also feared the dragon. She told her son not to feel sorry for the dragon. But as Akito’s birthday drew near, what he wanted most was to invite the dragon to his party.

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Akito’s Mother told him to “stop this dragon nonsense.” She feared the dragon would come down and snatch her son. Then three days before Akito’s birthday, he set off for the mountain in search of the dragon. He traveled on foot all day and ate some wild fruit and berries that he found. He slept in the forest, and continued his search for the dragon in the morning. He climbed up the mountain to the very top. There he called to the dragon. The dragon was shocked to have a human come to his mountain and call out to him. He blew smoke and fire and asked “who dares disturb the great dragon of the mountain?”

Akito was not afraid. He asked the dragon to come out from his cave. When he came out, Akito saw that the dragon looked just as the people had described him. The dragon wondered why the boy was there. Akito told him that he did not believe that he was a monster. He did not believe all the stories people told about him. Akito asked the dragon to come to his birthday party, so others in the village could meet him and would not be afraid anymore.

Since no human had ever spoken to the dragon in such a way or showed such kindness, the dragon felt emotion he had never felt before. He had never known the humans below the mountain to be kind. He only knew their fear and hatred of him. And because of the people’s hatred for him, the dragon also hated the people. But the kindness of Akita softened the dragon’s heart. The dragon could feel the hatred leaving him. The emotion caused him to cry. His tears created a river that floated down the mountain to the village below. The dragon lay down in the river and the boy got onto his back. Together they floated along the river of tears to the village below. As they neared the village the dragon transformed into a boat, which was in the shape of a dragon.

The people of the village recognized Akito as the boy who didn’t believe the stories of the fierce dragon. Akito announced that they will never fear the dragon again. He had become something that everyone could enjoy and love.