

## Chapter Three



A terrifying roar split the air. Aviatrix looked up from her meal of fat flies.

‘So there is,’ she said.

‘Mum,’ said Nosy, ‘hadn’t we better push off before it arrives?’

Every time T. rex roared, Nosy could see those long, sharp teeth, and they looked very sharp indeed.



'No hurry,' said Aviatrix. 'Time for a bit of fun. Do you remember what my name means?'

'Yes, Mum. Female flier.'

'And what else did I tell you?'

'You said you were paramount among all pterodactyls in the skills of flying.'

'Quite right, Nosy. Watch this,' said Aviatrix, and she took off and flew directly at the approaching tyrannosaurus.

Seeing her coming, it reared up to its full height and opened wide that huge mouth crammed with sharp teeth. It thought this was going to be an easy meal.

Now Aviatrix showed just how skilled a flier she was. As she neared that open mouth, she suddenly shot straight up into the air. And, as she zoomed over the head





of T. rex, she sank her sharp claws into its snout.

T. rex let out a loud bellow, not of pain (for its skin was too thick to be much harmed by a scratch from a pterodactyl) but of rage at the cheek of the creature. It watched in fury as Aviatrix now put on a show of aerobatics.



First she looped the loop, high above the great flesh-eater, then she dived back down, straight at it, so that the watching Nosy felt sure that his mother's last moment had come.

But no, gracefully she side-slipped past the open mouth and then began to sweep round and round T. rex's neck in tight circles, while it snapped furiously at her. It rocked unsteadily on its hind feet, becoming quite giddy in its vain efforts to catch this pest.

Shooting skywards once more in the steepest of climbs, Aviatrix hovered for a moment high above the tyrannosaurus. Then, folding her leathery wings, she dropped, twisting and turning like a falling leaf, apparently totally out of control.



It looked to Nosy as though his mother was going to go straight down the throat of T. rex. But all its last snap at her earned it was a mouthful of fresh air and another scratch on the nose.

Once more Aviatrix slipped past those gaping jaws and then climbed high, to perform one last magnificent feat of aerobatics. She spread her wings wide and rolled, with first her right wing pointing skywards, then her left, over and over and over, before she finally flew back to the body of the brachiosaurus, towards which the raging T. rex was now rushing at top speed.

‘Scramble, Nosy!’ she called down. ‘I think our friend is a bit upset.’

‘Gosh, Mum, you really are a paramount



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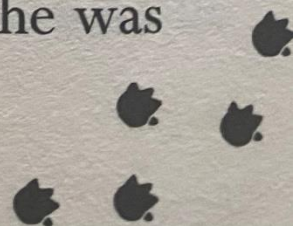
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flier!' said Nosy as they flew away together.

'What was that last thing you did?'

'That,' said his mother, 'was the  
Victory Roll.'

When Clawed eventually woke up, he  
remembered that something nice had  
happened. What was it? Oh yes, he was







a father, he had a son, Avy had brought the boy along to see him. What was he called? Oh yes, Nosy, that was it.

Clever little chap too, thought Clawed, knows some long words already, just like his mother. I don't know any long words. Oh no, wait a minute, I do know some. Pterodactyl to begin with, and – let's see now – diplodocus and iguanodon and allosaurus and stegosaurus and triceratops.



Not bad, eh? What have I left out? Oh, I know, horrible old Tyrannosaurus rex. Had a nightmare about it, didn't I? Sooner call it T. rex, though – short names are easier. Could shorten the others, I suppose. Dip. Ig. Al. Steg. Tri. No, it doesn't quite work.

Clawed yawned, tired by so much thinking. He was about to doze off again when he heard two voices.

'Clawed!' said one, and, 'Daddy!' said the other, and the branch creaked as his wife and his son landed to hang upside down on either side of him.

'Hullo,' he said. 'Where have you two been?'

'Nosy will tell you,' replied Aviatrix.

'Oh, Daddy!' cried Nosy. 'We've had





ever such an exciting time! We were feeding on a brachiosaurus —'

'What, eating it?' interrupted Clawed. 'How did you manage that?'

'Don't be silly, Clawed,' said Aviatrix.

'Nosy means we were on a brachiosaurus, feeding. On flies. Don't interrupt the boy.'

'Oh, sorry,' said Clawed. 'Go on, Nosy.'

'And then,' went on Nosy, 'what d'you think we saw, Daddy?'

'Haven't a clue,' said Clawed.

'Have a guess.'

'One of our relations, perhaps? Haven't seen my brother for a while. You'd like your Uncle Eggbert, Nosy. He's nearly as big as me.'

And nearly as silly, said Aviatrix to herself, smiling fondly at her husband.



‘No, Daddy,’ said Nosy. ‘It wasn’t a pterosaur we saw, it was a dinosaur.’

Dip? Ig? Al? Steg? Tri? thought Clawed. I don’t know.

‘I give up,’ he said.

‘We saw a T. rex!’ said Nosy. ‘And Mum did some absolutely fantastic, superlative aerobatics.’

‘Which you will probably be able to do just as well when you’re grown up, Nosy,’ said Aviatrix. ‘Thanks to your primogeniture.’

‘What does that word mean, Avy?’ asked Clawed.

‘Literally,’ replied Aviatrix, ‘it means the circumstance of being firstborn. If you comprehend the purport of my prognostication.’



Clawed looked blank.

'Mum means I'm going to be a good flier, Daddy,' said Nosy.

Clawed looked pleased.

'You're bound to be, my son,' he said, 'with a father like me.'