

Chapter Seven



Of all the creatures that lived on the Great Plain, the nastiest was Tyrannosaurus rex, and of all tyrannosauruses the biggest and most bloodthirsty was the one that Aviatrix and Nosy had met when they were fly-catching on the body of the dead brachiosaurus. His name was Hack the Ripper.

What he liked best was to hunt a dinosaur – any one of the many kinds of grass-eaters that roamed the plain – and kill it, and eat it, or as much of it as he could stomach. Hack's favourite prey was baby dinosaur, not because it was too slow to escape him – they were all too slow, whatever their age – but because a baby made such a lovely meal: so tender, so tasty, so mouth-watering.

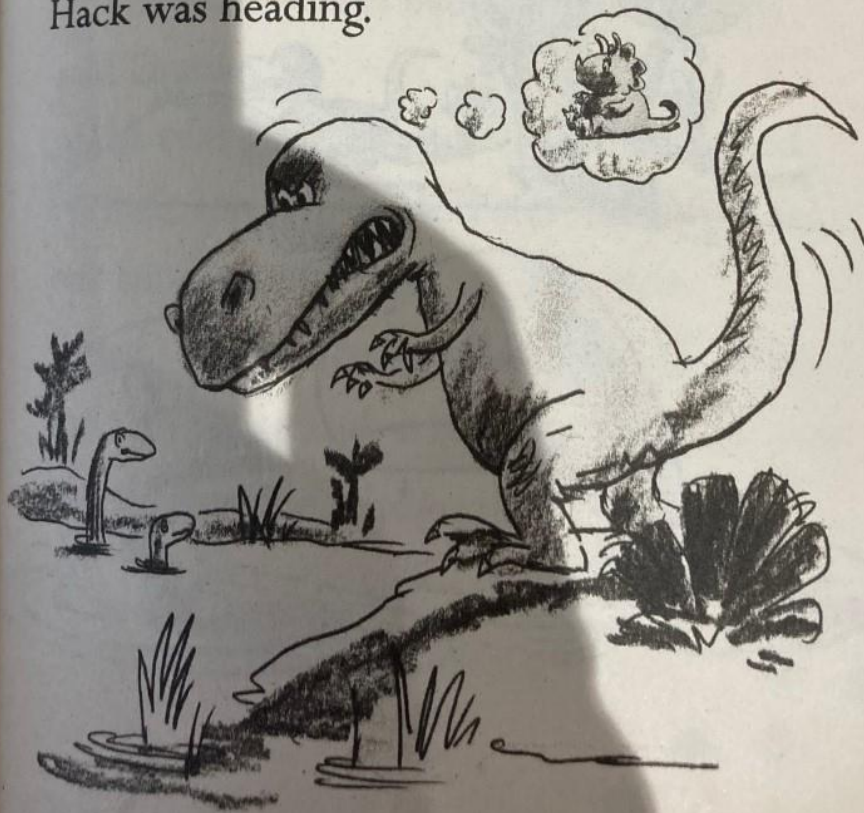
On one particular morning he was walking upright across the plain, scanning the various herds of animals with his cold, hard eyes, looking to see if there was a nice fat baby nearby.

As soon as they saw him, diplodocuses, iguanodons and the rest all moved away, slowly of course, turning small heads on

the end of long necks to see if he was following.

Hack the Ripper was hungry, but not ravenously hungry. He decided he would have a drink – it was a hot day – before beginning his hunting.

It so happened that Titanic and Gargantua were standing at the edge of the lake, at the very spot indeed to which Hack was heading.



They had been out grazing on the plain since first light and their huge stomachs were packed full of grass. Now, when they saw T. rex approaching, they splashed as hastily as they could out into deep water and submerged. Only their nostrils showed.



Some minutes passed, and then, slowly, Titanic put his head up and then so did Gargantua.

'It's all right, Gargy,' said Titanic. 'The brute is going,' and they watched as Hack strode away back to the grasslands.

'Horrible thing!' said Gargantua. 'I wonder what wretched animal will die today to feed its disgusting appetite?'

'They say it likes baby dinosaurs best,' said Titanic.

The two great apatosauruses stretched up their long necks and stared, first at one another and then, as the same thought struck them, all around the lake and its shore, and with one voice, a horrified voice, they cried, 'Where's our Banty?'