

Chapter Eight



Thinking about his new friend, Nosy had become worried about her. He knew all about T. rex — he'd seen one, close up, after all — but he was pretty sure that Banty did not.

Obviously her parents had never told her, never warned her of the danger of the

plain's fiercest flesh-eater. They just hope, he supposed, that she'll never meet one.

She should be told, he thought. I'll get Mum and Daddy to tell her, and I might even be able to persuade them to fly over and have a chat with Banty's ma and pa.

With all this in mind, he had flown off very early that morning in search of his friend. By luck, he found her at the lake's edge. He glided down.

'Hullo, Banty!' he called.

Banty looked up.

'Oh, hullo, Nosy!' she cried. 'Where are you off to?'

'I've just come to see you,' Nosy said. 'I wanted to ask you something.'

'What?'

'Well, how would you like to come and

see where I live with my mum and my daddy?’

‘Where’s that?’

‘In the woods. It’s not far. You wouldn’t be scared, would you?’

‘Scared?’ said Banty. ‘Of what?’

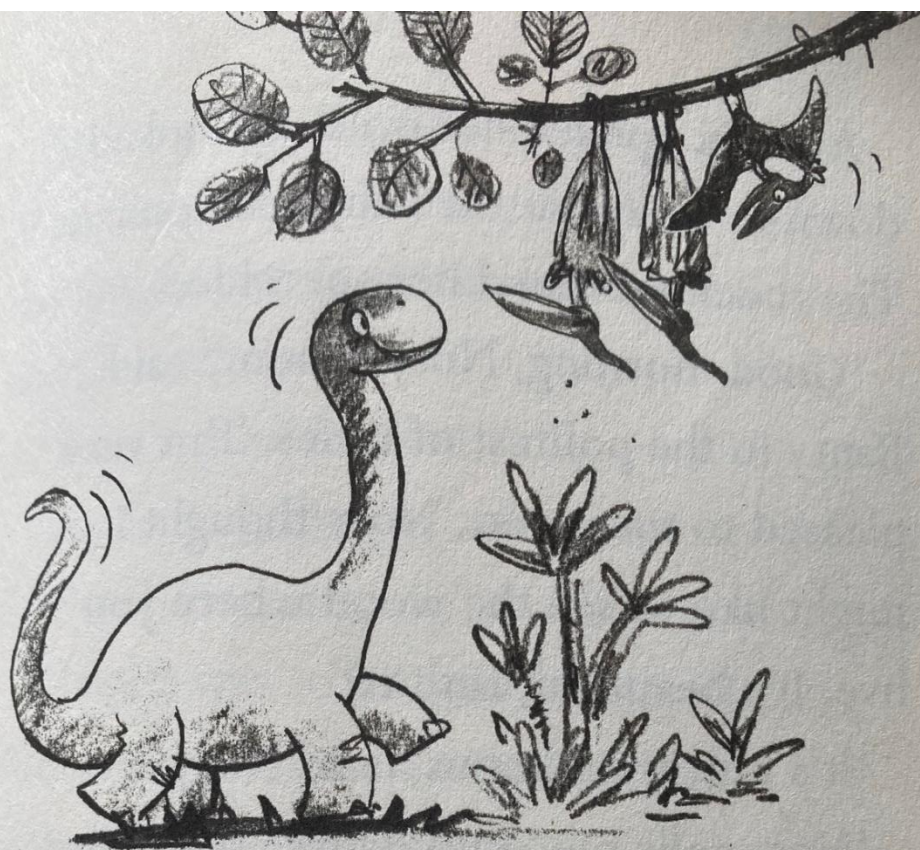
‘Oh, of . . . um . . . leaving your ma and pa for a while.’

‘No,’ said Banty. ‘They probably won’t even notice I’m gone.’

‘Well, come on, then,’ said Nosy. ‘I’ll fly very slowly above to show you the way.’

And to keep a good lookout for You-Know-Who, he thought.

Before long, Banty was standing in the pterodactyls’ wood, looking up at Clawed and Aviatrix as they hung, still asleep,



above her. They were on a fresh branch because, the previous evening, Nosy had persuaded his parents to move. He didn't want Banty to have to stand in a bed of deep, pongy poo.

'Mum, Daddy, wake up!' he called, hitching on to the branch beside them. 'I've brought my friend Banty to meet you.'

Aviatrix opened her eyes and looked down in horror at the baby apatosaurus. The shock rendered her speechless.

'Good morning, Nosy's mum,' said Banty in the politest of tones. 'I'm very pleased to meet you. Nosy thought I might like to see the wood where you live. It's beautiful, isn't it?'

'It's pulchritudinous,' said Nosy.

'Nosy tells me,' said Banty, 'that you have taught him a great many long words. You must be very clever.'

'Sagacious,' said Nosy.

'That too,' said Banty.

'The epithets are synonymous,' said Aviatrix.

Quite a nice little thing, she thought. Well, not little, but nice. Good manners.

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At this point Clawed woke up. He was about to do a poo, always his first act of the day, but seeing what stood below him, he refrained.

'Who's this?' he said.

'My friend, Daddy,' said Nosy.

'Good morning, sir,' said Banty.

Clawed was so astonished at being addressed with such respect that he almost fell off the branch.



'Morning,' he said.

'Her name is Banty, Daddy,' said Nosy, 'and I've brought her to see you and Mum for a very special reason. Knowing how clever you both are.'

Aviatrix looked very pleased at this, Clawed very puzzled.

'And what is this very special reason?' asked Aviatrix.

'I want you to warn her,' said Nosy.

'Warn her? Against what?'

'T. rex.'

'What's that?' asked Banty.

'Tyrannosaurus rex,' replied Aviatrix.

'The fiercest of the carnivores.'

'Please, Nosy's mum — what is a carnivore?'

'A meat-eater. And stop calling me

"Nosy's mum". My name is Aviatrix.'

'And mine's Clawed,' said Clawed, 'but you can go on calling me "sir" if you like – I quite fancy it.'

'Hang on a minute,' said Nosy.

'We all are,' said Clawed, taking a fresh grip on the branch with his large talons.

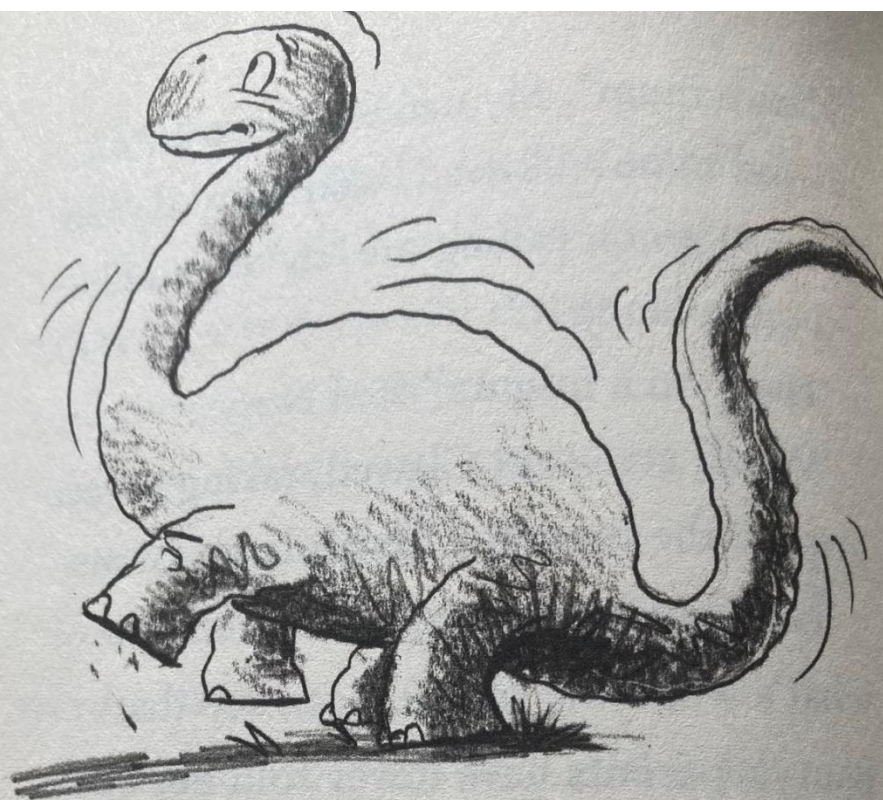
'No, Daddy, I mean, let me tell you what's worrying me. You can see that Banty's parents have never told her about T. rex, though I don't know why. Which means she's in terrible danger if she ever comes across one.'

'She is vulnerable,' said Aviatrix.

'What's that mean, Avy?' asked Clawed.

'Capable of being physically wounded or injured or, in Banty's case, killed and eaten.'

Banty shuddered (and when an



apatosaurus, even a small one, shudders, it's quite a sight).

'What does this awful thing look like?' she said, and the two adult pterodactyls told her, each in its own way.

Aviatrix's description was full of long words like 'formidable', 'terroristic', 'repulsive' and 'unprepossessing'.

Clawed, who understood none of these adjectives, simply said, 'Big and scary.'

'But surely, sir,' said Banty, 'this T. rex creature couldn't kill something as big as an apatosaurus?'

'Easily,' said Clawed.

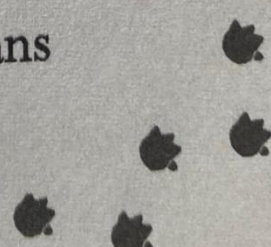
'And you're only a baby one,' said Aviatrix.

By now she had warmed to this odd-looking, innocent young animal.

'You must take great care, Banty, dear,' she said. 'We can always escape by flying, but you can't.'

'Mum, Daddy,' said Nosy, 'please could you do my friend here a big favour?'

'Indubitably,' said his mother, 'and before you ask me, Clawed, that means without a doubt.'



‘What d’you want?’ asked Clawed.

‘Could you both come over to the lake with me so that you can meet Banty’s parents? Neither of us knows why, but they don’t seem to like pterodactyls and you don’t like apatosauruses. Banty and I are friends, but wouldn’t it be nice if we were all friends – both families, I mean?’

‘Would you like us to come, Banty?’
Nosy’s mother asked.

‘Oh yes, I would, please!’

‘Then we will,’ said Clawed. ‘I could do with a drink anyway.’