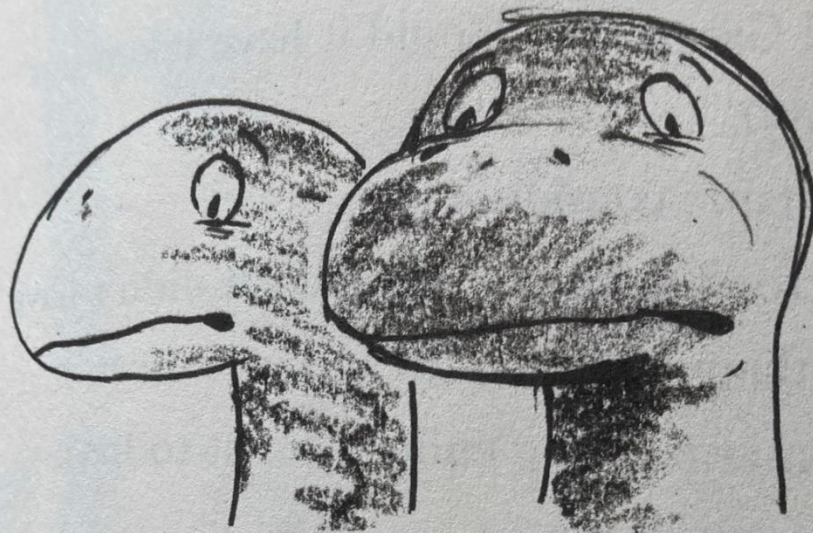


## Chapter Nine



'Banty! Banty!' called Gargantua and Titanic as they lumbered round the rim of the lake, but there was no response.

When they stopped to get their breath, at a point that chanced to be the nearest to the distant woods, Gargantua gasped, 'It couldn't have taken her, could it?'



Titanic looked puzzled.  
'What couldn't have taken who?' he asked.

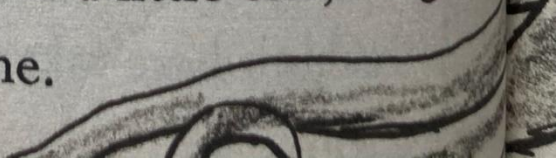
'That T. rex we've just seen, you fool,' said Gargantua. 'Could it have taken our Banty?'

Titanic considered.

'Don't think so,' he said. 'It didn't have anything in its mouth and we weren't submerged long enough for it to have time to —'

'Stop!' cried Gargantua. 'Don't say it!' and she shuddered the most enormous apatosaurian shudder.

Just then they saw, flying towards them from the direction of the woods, three pterodactyls. There was a little one, a big one and a very big one.





'We could ask those wotchermeallits if they've seen her,' Titanic said.

'Pterodactyls!' said Gargantua scornfully. 'They wouldn't know the difference between an iguanodon and a triceratops. Stupid things! I've no use for them.'

At that moment the small pterodactyl detached itself from the two much larger ones, which were flying very slowly, and flew, very quickly, towards the apatosauruses.





'Ugh!' said Gargantua. 'One of them is coming straight to us. If it speaks, don't answer, Titanic.'

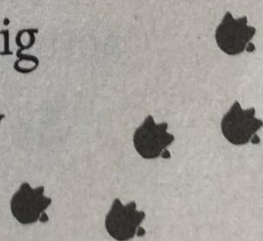
'Good morning!' squeaked Nosy when he reached them. 'I've a favour to ask you. Could I introduce my mum and my daddy to you?' There was no answer.

'Oh,' said Nosy, 'we've got Banty with us,' he added.

'What?' bellowed both apatosauruses.

'We've got Banty. We've brought her home,' said Nosy. 'Look, you can see her now.'

Titanic and Gargantua stretched up their long necks to the fullest extent, and there was their missing daughter, coming towards them, escorted by the two big pterodactyls, which were flying, very





slowly, above her.

'Oh, my Banty!' called Gargantua, waddling forward. 'You're safe!'

'Ma thought you might have been eaten by that T. rex,' said Titanic.

'Oh, you saved her!' cried Gargantua to Aviatrix and Clawed. 'You saved my Banty! Oh, how can we ever thank you enough?'

Clawed looked extremely puzzled.

'Saved her?' he began, but Aviatrix quickly interrupted him.

'We are glad to have been of help,' she said to Gargantua. 'We weren't sure if Banty was aware of certain dangers.'

'Like T. rex,' said Clawed. 'Although actually . . .'

'Be quiet a minute, Clawed,' said





Aviatrix, and, 'Hang on, Daddy,' said Nosy, a suggestion which his father instantly obeyed, on a branch of the nearest tree.

Aviatrix and Nosy, hovering above, looked down at Banty, and she looked up at them, and each knew exactly what the others were thinking.

Let my ma and pa believe that the pterodactyl family *did* rescue me





somehow, thought Banty, just as Aviatrix and Nosy thought, let's pretend we did rescue her. That way they'll be very grateful and we'll all be the best of friends.

When the apatosauruses had finished nuzzling the child they thought they had lost, Gargantua started to make a speech.

'First of all,' she said to Aviatrix and Nosy, 'please do join your, er . . .'

'Husband,' said Aviatrix.

'Daddy,' said Nosy.

' . . . on that branch. So much less tiring than having to beat your wings all the time,' and when they took her advice, she went on to address the three of them.

'I cannot begin to tell you,' she said, 'how grateful Titanic . . .'

'Your husband?' said Aviatrix.



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'My daddy,' said Banty.

'... how grateful we are to all of you for saving our beloved child. We have met dear little Nosy before and now are honoured to be introduced to his parents, though I fear I do not know your names.'

'Aviatrix,' said Nosy's mother.

'Clawed,' said his father.

'I,' said Banty's mother, 'am Gargantua, and my husband, Titanic, and we are the happiest apatosauruses in the world thanks to your pterodactylic heroism in rescuing our Banty from the clutches of T. rex.'

'But —' said Clawed.

'Hang on, dear,' said Aviatrix.

'I am hanging on.'

'If you will allow me to say so,' went on

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Aviatrix, 'I think that perhaps you, as Banty's parents, should have made her more aware of the danger posed by a certain carnivore . . .'

'T. rex,' said Clawed.

' . . . danger,' continued Aviatrix, 'of which she may have known nothing.'

'We should! We should!' cried Gargantua. 'Just think, Titanic, she might have become the prey of that T. rex that came to the lake if this brave pterodactyl family had not somehow rescued her. Oh, how grateful we are to you all!'

Clawed, as so often, looked puzzled.

'We rescued her, did we, Avy?' he asked.

'Of course we did!' said Aviatrix and Nosy.

Now Titanic cleared his very long throat.





'As head of the family,' he said to Clawed, 'I must thank you, sir, from the bottom of my heart.'

Clawed had by now realized that, what with one thing and another, he had not yet performed what was usually his first act of the day, and in some confusion at this thought and at once again being



addressed as 'sir', he became muddled and replied, 'It is I who must thank you, from the heart of my bottom.'

Then he spread his huge wings and flew hastily away to a branch on another tree, where he did his morning poo out of sight of the rest.