



Tyrannosaurus Forest

Written and Illustrated by
Scott E. Sutton

Action Publishing • Los Angeles

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SCIENCE LOG #1

TOP SECRET!

DO NOT
READ
THIS!

UNLESS ONE
OF THOSE
MONSTERS
EATS ME UP!

by Benjamin "Banjo" Montgomery, Paleontologist in training

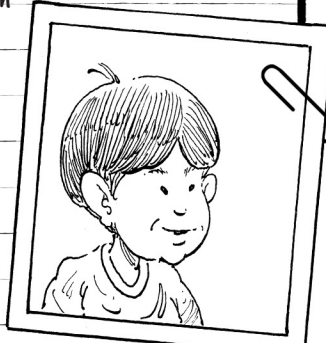
Photos by Lee Wong & Artwork by Banjo

Subject: The Greatest Discovery Ever - We found live dinosaurs!



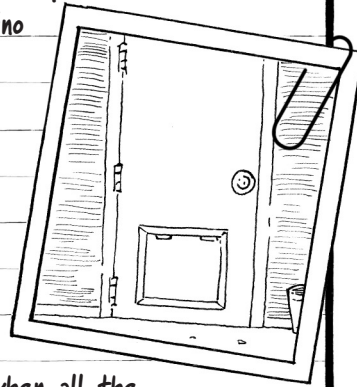
This is my dog, Dino. That's short for Dinosaur Dog. I gave him that name because when he was a puppy the only toy he would play with was a stuffed dinosaur doll. He's a Chow-Chow dog. They're really loyal and good watchdogs. It was Dino that made the really weird discovery in our garage. Dino must be very lucky because so far he hasn't been eaten by dinosaurs.

This is my best friend Lee Wong. He's the same age as me and lives two houses down from me. He's very good at math and science and plans stuff out well. But he's pretty freaked out about this THING in the garage.



And this is me, Benjamin "Banjo" Montgomery. I'm ten years old, same as Lee. Everybody calls me Banjo because it was my great grandfather's nickname. He was a famous paleontologist (that's a scientist who studies dinosaurs) and he played the banjo, too. Since I like dinosaurs so much my parents started calling me Banjo. I'm going to be a paleontologist when I grow up (that is if I don't get eaten first).

Okay, let me start from the beginning. This whole mess started many years ago when my dad built an extra big doggie door for Dino going from our garage to our backyard so Dino wouldn't pee in the house. Dad made the edges of the doggie door out of some new weird metal he got out of a trash can at his work. Everything was fine until about 10 days ago. That's when all the weird stuff started to happen.

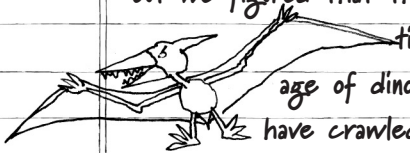


One day after school around 4 o'clock me and Lee were taking Dino out into the backyard to play catch when we noticed a bright light coming from Dino's doggie door. When Dino went through the doggie door HE DISAPPEARED! We opened the door to the backyard and the lights disappeared and Dino was nowhere. We were freaking out! We looked everywhere but no Dino. He wasn't in the backyard. He wasn't in the house. He was totally GONE! But when Lee and I shut the door to the yard—BAM!—the lights in the doggie door came back and after a short time so did Dino. We checked him out and he was okay, not a scratch on him.

The next few days we came back and from 4:00 to 4:30 the weird thing happened all over again. There were lights in the doggie door, Dino goes in, Dino disappears, and then he comes out okay. It was the weirdest thing you ever saw. So me and Lee formed an official secret science team to investigate. Lee tied a rope around my waist and held onto one end while I crawled on my hands and knees through the doggie door. That way, if I started screaming Lee could pull me out.

So I went in. When I crawled through the doggie door I was in a long tunnel made of different colored lights or electricity or something. It didn't hurt so I crawled and crawled until I reached the end and at the end there was some kind of forest. But it wasn't a regular forest with deer and rabbits and birds. This forest was crawling with DINOSAURS! I swear I'm not lying. There were REAL DINOSAURS! They've been extinct for over 65 million years!

I let Lee take a look, and after he was done freaking out we figured that this tunnel must be some kind of time warp tunnel going back to the age of dinosaurs. Since then Lee and me have crawled through this "time warp tunnel" four times, but we stayed right at the entrance so we wouldn't get eaten. We saw a lot of small dinosaurs. We even saw some huge Pteranodons (those are flying dinosaurs) fly over us.



Lee said we had to bring back proof of our discovery and turn it over to real scientists to study. So we tried to collect some pieces of plants and rocks to bring back. We also took a bunch of photographs. But when we brought all the stuff back through the tunnel it DISAPPEARED and the photos were blank. We tried to bring back samples over and over again. Same thing, the samples disappeared and the photos were blank. We even tried to use my dad's video camera and every time the video came out blank!



Since we have no proof, we are going to secretly explore it and get as much information as we can because we don't know how long the time warp tunnel will last or even what's causing it. Then we have to figure out how to get someone to believe us who won't think we're a bunch of nuts.

Today is the big day. Me, Lee and Dino are going in to this thing and walk around the forest. Lee's so scared he can't sleep. I admit I'm pretty scared, too. (Dino doesn't care. He just wants to chase stuff.) My next science log entry will be tomorrow. That is if I don't get eaten first. If I do get eaten and my mom and dad read this: MOM AND DAD, I SWEAR THIS IS TRUE!

SECURITY ALERT! SECURITY ALERT!



MY LITTLE SISTER



DO NOT let this person know about the time warp tunnel.
She is known to be a little brat. She is not armed but
she bites and scratches. She is very
dangerous and will blab about this to
everybody on Planet Earth.



Name: Cassie Montgomery

Age: 5 1/2 years old

Hair color: Red

Eye color: Blue

Weight: Skinny

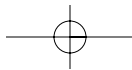
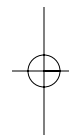
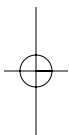
Known to have temper tantrums for no good reason.
(Did I mention she bites?)

AVOID CONTACT WITH THIS PERSON AT ALL COSTS

End of Science Log Entry #1

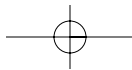
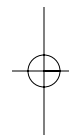
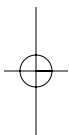
Signed,

Benjamin Montgomery



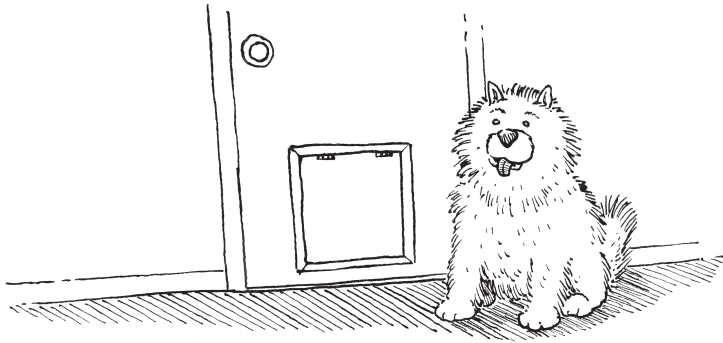
Book 1

Tyrannosaurus Forest



Chapter One

Destination Dinosaurs



“**W**hat time is it?” whispered Benjamin “Banjo” Montgomery as he ran his hand nervously through his thick red hair. “Banjo” was what all his friends and family called him. It was a nickname his parents gave him when he was very young.

“Five minutes later than the last time you asked me,” whispered Lee Wong in an angry voice. He was even more nervous than Banjo. Today was the big day. This time they

were going all the way in!

“C’mon, Lee. Time!” whined Banjo.

“Three forty, exactly,” said Lee in a huff. “See?” showing Banjo his watch.

“Okay,” replied Banjo. “Twenty minutes to go. Good. Let’s do an equipment check.”

“Right,” Lee said. “You got my list?”

“Yep,” he replied.

“Okay, read it off,” said Lee.

Banjo read the supply list off like an army sergeant.

“Water?”

“Check,” replied Lee.

“Pocket knives?”

“Check.”

“Binoculars?”

“Yeah.”

“Sunglasses?”

“Yep.”

“Flashlight?”

“Check.”

“Food?”

“Yep.”

“Ponchos?”

“Uh-huh.”

“Dinosaur book?”

“Wait ... there it is. Yeah.”

“Slingshots?”

“Yep, got ’em.”

This went on until Banjo and Lee had checked off everything. They both had gone on a lot of camping trips with their parents and knew to always go prepared into the wilderness. “You can never be too prepared,” Mr. Montgomery would always say. They carefully packed everything into their backpacks, and closed up all the pockets.

“You know, Banjo, even though every piece of proof we’ve tried to bring back through the time tunnel disappeared, I still think we should tell somebody about this time warp thing, this ... whatever it is!” said Lee, shaking his head. Lee Wong liked to be very cautious about things, take things one step at a time, not rush in. He was just the opposite of his best friend Banjo, who was always diving in head-first. This whole doggie-door-going-back-to-dinosaur-times thing was way too weird for him. “It should be turned over to adult scientists to handle, not two crazy 10-year-old kids and a dog,” thought Lee.

“Oh, yeah, right!” Banjo replied, laughing. “Hey, Mom and Dad, guess what? At exactly four o’clock every day Dino’s doggie door opens up a time warp that goes back millions of years to the age of dinosaurs. Pretty cool, huh? Can we keep it, huh? Can we? Huh? Huh?” said Banjo jokingly. “Get real, Lee. If we tell someone about this without proof to back it up they’ll just lock us in the looney bin and throw away the key.”

“Yeah ... I know,” growled Lee, “but just you remember the old Chinese saying: ‘He who rushes into danger carelessly ... uhh ... will get squashed like bug.’”

“What!” exclaimed Banjo. “Sounds like a Chinese saying you made up.”

“So what? I’m Chinese and I said it, so ... there! Ha, ha, ha,” replied Lee. He managed to laugh a little, even though he was so nervous he’d barely slept at all last night.

“Okay. Look, Lee,” said Banjo, “we’ve been through the doggie door four times and we’ve been real careful. We didn’t go out of sight of the time warp tunnel entrance. We saw some small dinosaurs and nothing happened.”

“Except some prehistoric bird pooped on my head!” exclaimed Lee, trying not to laugh. “It’s bad luck getting pooped on by a bird, you know.”



“First of all, Pteranodons are not birds. And secondly, the poop disappeared when we came back through the time tunnel,” said Banjo, giggling. That was one of the funniest things he’d ever seen. It was better than a cartoon. Lee’s black hair all covered with white dinosaur doo. It stunk so bad, and Lee was screaming and yelling. Man, that was funny. “Anyway, think of it,” added Banjo. “You’re the first human being ever to be bombed by a real

Pteranodon. You should be proud.” Banjo was laughing.

“Oh yeah, laugh it up, dude,” said Lee. “Listen, Banjo, we’ve gotta be extra careful. I think those dinosaurs are a lot meaner than they look and I don’t want to get eaten. My mom would kill me if I got eaten.”

“Don’t worry,” said Banjo. “That’s why we’re taking all this survival stuff with us. Plus, with our camouflage army uniforms on, I’ll bet you those dinosaurs won’t even be able to see us. We look like walking bushes, so don’t sweat it.”

Just then Dino came trotting into the garage from the Montgomery’s kitchen.

“Dino, come,” commanded Banjo. Dino, a big, fuzzy Chow-Chow dog who looked more like a cross between a bear and a lion than a dog, ran to Banjo wagging his fuzzy tail wildly. Dino knew what time it was. It was time to chase dinosaurs. He’d been through the door seven times or more and had always managed to come back alive. Barely. Banjo hooked him up to a long leash.

“Good idea,” said Lee. “That’s all we need is that crazy dog to go running away from us right into a pack of Tyrannosaurs or something.”

“I’m not crazy,” thought Dino. “It’s a dog’s job to chase things.”

“Dinosaurs aren’t used to eating dogs or people. We’d probably make ’em barf,” said Banjo, “and Dino hasn’t gotten eaten yet, has he?”

“I don’t even wanna think about it,” said Lee, waving his hands in front of his face. The idea of seeing live dinosaurs was hard enough to accept. He couldn’t imagine being eaten by one.

“You ready?” asked Banjo.

“Yeah. Ready as I’ll ever be,” sighed Lee. “But I’m going in with my slingshot loaded and ready,” he added. “Anything tries to eat me, WHAP! I’ll blast ’em right in the nose.”

“Good idea,” said Banjo. He tied Dino’s leash to his belt and pulled out his slingshot. “Now I’m ready,” he said. “A slingshot would probably be useless against something as big as a dinosaur,” thought Banjo. “But if it makes Lee feel safer, then fine.”

Dino and the boys made their way to the doorway that led from the garage to the Montgomery’s backyard. Cut into the bottom of the door was an oversized doggie door plenty big enough for Banjo and Lee to crawl through, even wearing their backpacks. Banjo’s dad had made the doggie door big, in case Dino ever grew into those giant paws of his.

“How much time now?” asked Banjo.

“Five minutes,” replied Lee.

“Banjo, honey, did you finish your homework?” yelled Banjo’s mom from the kitchen.

“Yesss, Mommm,” Banjo yelled back.

“Okay. Dinner’s at six. Make sure you’re washed up. I’m making your favorite, meatloaf,” she said.

“Okayy, Mommm,” said Banjo, rolling his eyes.

Lee made a face at Banjo and laughed. They’d be home on time, no problem. For some reason, for each day (twenty-four hours) that went by back in the time warp only one minute went by in the present. The time warp only lasted thirty minutes in the present, but thirty days in the past. That’s what Lee had figured out and he was very good with math. He had calculated it three times to be sure.

Suddenly, Dino stared at the doggie door and whined. A series of lights began to flash like lightning outside of it. “It’s almost time,” he thought.

“Five seconds,” exclaimed Lee. “Four, three, two, one...”

There was a blinding flash of light and a gust of wind as the flap of the doggie door blew open.

Chapter Two

Blast From The Past



“Okay, let’s go,” whispered Banjo. The boys each put on their sunglasses, got down on their hands and knees and crawled slowly through the dog door and into the light with Dino leading the way, just as they had done four times before.

“I wonder why you can get into this time warp tunnel through the doggie door, but when you open the door to the backyard the time warp disappears?” yelled Lee. “Maybe it’s

that metal your Dad used to make the doggie door frame.”

“Don’t know,” Banjo yelled back. “It’s weird.” He left that sort of science stuff to Lee. All Banjo cared about was seeing dinosaurs. He was the paleontologist-in-training. Banjo was his name, studying dinosaurs was his game.

Dino and the boys crawled for what seemed like a long time through a small tunnel made of white, blue, and green light. Everything was buzzing loudly around them, like electricity through wires, and they had a tingling sensation running through their arms and legs but it didn’t hurt them at all.

“We’re almost at the end,” yelled Banjo.

First Dino, then Banjo and finally Lee came out of the time warp tunnel into the sunlight and removed their sunglasses. They were hit in the face with a burst of warm, thick air and a bad smell—a rotten smell.

“PU!” exclaimed Banjo. “Boy, it stinks here!”

“FOOO! No kidding,” said Lee. “I can never get used to that smell. Smells like dead stuff. Sickening.”

Dino snorted. “It always smells like that here,” he thought. “It’s because of the big lizard things. We should be careful of the big lizard things.”

Dino and the boys stood silently. They were at the edge

of a large clearing surrounded by tall green ferns and what looked like a pine tree forest with flowering bushes covering the ground.

“Well,” sighed Banjo. “Today we’re gonna get a look at what’s out there.” Banjo pointed his finger at the surrounding trees.

“Okay, but let’s make sure we keep track of where the time warp tunnel entrance is,” said Lee. “You got that red plastic marking tape stuff?” he asked.

“Yeah, right here,” replied Banjo, as he dug it out of his backpack. He handed the roll of wide fluorescent red tape to Lee. “You’re in charge of marking trees. Make sure we can see the markers.”

“Sure, no problem,” said Lee. He tore a piece of tape off and tied it to a small palm tree near the tunnel entrance where it could be clearly seen. “There. How’s that?”

“Cool. Now which way should we go?” asked Banjo quietly.

“Let’s just go!” thought Dino. “No more planning! You take too long.”

“How about over there?” said Lee, as he pointed to a break in the forest off to their right. “There’s a clear spot that overlooks what looks like a big valley.” They walked slowly

and quietly across the clearing, Dino was so anxious to get going he was practically dragging Banjo through the bushes. Chow-Chow dogs are very strong, and very determined.

“Dino, slow down,” whispered Banjo as he tugged on the leash.

“I wish they’d let me off this leash,” thought Dino. “People move too slow. There’s so many good smells here.”

“Keep your eyes open, Banjo,” said Lee, also whispering. “I don’t want to get attacked by some meat-eating dinosaur looking for an easy meal.”

“I’m watching. I’m watching. Don’t worry,” he replied.

There were so many different sounds coming from all around them. Squawks, roars, chirps, and screeches like a very noisy jungle. The air was really humid and sticky. It was so humid that there were light clouds of mist floating throughout the forest and bushes, making the whole place look spooky. The afternoon sun was hot, too, making the boys sweaty and uncomfortable.

“Phew, this is worse than Florida in the summer,” said Lee, pulling at his collar.

“I’ve never been to Florida in the summer,” said Banjo.

“Trust me, this is worse,” said Lee.

A small flying creature of some sort flew in front of them,

screached, then quickly disappeared into the forest. Dino barked at it. It made the boys jump. They were very jittery.

“Dino, quiet,” said Banjo. “No, boy. Shhh!”

Dino whined. “I wanna chase that bird,” he thought. He continued sniffing the ground and dragging Banjo along.

The boys kept moving steadily towards the break in the forest. Lee was tying red tape around bushes and trees about every ten feet, making a trail they could follow back easily. “It would be so easy to get lost out here,” thought Lee. “That’s all we need—to get lost back in time, in a place like this.”

Suddenly Banjo stopped walking. He was looking down at the ground. His eyes became as big as saucers.

Lee came up to his side. “What is it? What did you find?” he asked quietly.

“Look!” whispered Banjo, as he pointed to the ground.

Right there in front of them, heading off to the right in the soft mud, were a set of the biggest footprints Banjo had ever seen. They had three pointed toes with claw marks at the ends. The tracks were over ten feet apart.

“Holy cow,” gulped Lee. “Tyrannosaurus, or something?”

“Or something,” said Banjo, frowning. “Looks just like

the footprints I saw in the museum. Definitely a meat-eater. Look how far apart they are. This guy is big, too.”

A sniff of the footprint made Dino put his tail between his legs and whine. He definitely didn’t like the smell. He’d smelled it before. It meant trouble. “This is bad,” he thought. “Very mean, big monster lizards.”

“Look, the footprint is filled with water. So maybe it was made a while ago,” said Lee. “I hope,” he added.

“But it probably rains here a lot,” added Banjo. “Maybe it was made not so long ago. We gotta be real careful, Lee. These big meat-eaters have got to be bad news.”

For the first time Lee saw a worried look on Banjo’s face. “Banjo must be pretty scared,” he thought. “I sure hope we don’t run into whatever made that footprint. This trip is looking more and more like a bad idea.”

“Let’s get away from this trail quick,” said Banjo, looking around nervously.

“Okay,” said Lee. He tied another piece of red tape to a tree and they all moved quickly across, jumping over the giant footprint as they went. They made their way to the edge of the thick green forest, where they stood on a sort of a cliff overlooking a huge valley with lots of lakes and swamps. There were trees everywhere, even growing into the lakes.



The clearings between the lakes and trees were full of strange plants, ferns and more flowering bushes. You could see for miles and miles to what looked like an ocean on the far horizon.

“Wow,” sighed Lee. “This is sooo strange. It’s like another planet or something.”

“It is ... sort of,” said Banjo. “This is planet Earth millions of years ago.”

“Yeah!” sighed Lee.

A cool breeze was blowing up from the valley, giving some relief from the heat and humidity.

“Oh, man,” exclaimed Banjo. “Lee, look over there.”

Lee didn’t see them at first. “Where?” he asked. “What are you looking at?”

Banjo pointed to the north, to a field that appeared to be covered with hundreds, maybe thousands of big gray and green boulders.

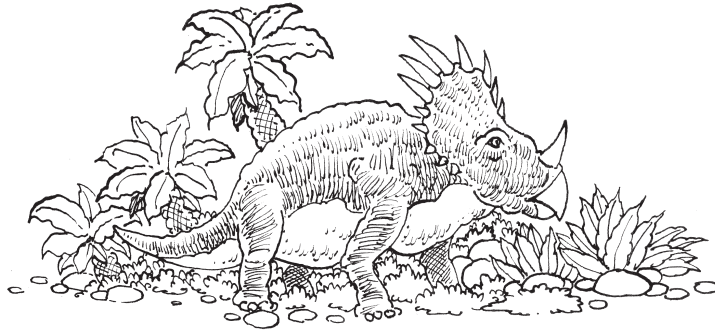
“What, those big boulders?” asked Lee, confused. “So what?”

“They’re not boulders,” said Banjo. “Look closely.”

Lee looked hard for a minute. “Holy cows!” he exclaimed. “The boulders. They’re moving!”

Chapter Three

Strangers in A Strange Land



“**B**inoculars,” ordered Banjo. Lee reached into a pocket of his backpack and pulled out a pair of very small, lightweight binoculars, unfolded them and gave them to Banjo.

“What are they?” whispered Lee. “They looked like rhinoceroses with a shield and three big horns on their heads. Maybe Triceratops. Is that what they are?”

“It’s hard to see,” Banjo replied. “They’re browsing in

some pretty thick brush ... Triceratops, I think. Yeah ... yeah ... three horns ... Triceratops. And over there ... something different. Hmmm ... could be ... Styracosaurus. No, it's sort of like a Triceratops; it has three horns, but it has a much bigger shield on its head. There's not very many of them. I'm not positive, but I think it's a Torosaurus."

"Let me see, let me see!" exclaimed Lee, grabbing for the binoculars.

"Okay, okay," replied Banjo, as he handed the binoculars to Lee. "Think of it—we're the first people to see dinosaurs. Live dinosaurs!" Banjo could hardly contain his excitement. He had a big grin on his freckled face and was dancing around.

Lee was quietly watching the giant herd of Triceratops eating plants with their beak-like mouths. There were young ones, old ones and some babies, too. He could hear them make grunting noises and every once in a while one of the huge beasts would make a deep mooing sound, a little like a hippopotamus. Many of the babies were galloping around playing amongst the bushes. Some were butting heads with each other; some were eating.

The artists who had tried to recreate these beasts in

paintings for dinosaur books had done a pretty good job trying to figure out how they looked. But these dinosaurs, well, they looked different than those in the books. For one thing, they were alive and bigger, much bigger, with more muscles. And the colors were different.

The Triceratops were gray with dark green blotches and the Torosaurs had dark green blotches, but the rest of their skin was reddish brown. They were dirty or faded-looking and made the creatures blend in with their surroundings. The boys silently took turns with the binoculars, watching the herds. After all these years of reading dinosaur books and wondering what they were really like, now here they were big as life right in front of their eyes. “Every paleontologist in the world would give anything to be here,” thought Banjo. “Unbelievable!”

Dino watched them, too, sniffing the air the way dogs do, sort of like looking with his nose. “Those lizard cows are too big to chase,” he thought. “I don’t like the look of those horns.”

“Hey,” said Lee, “there’s some dinosaurs near that swamp to the right. They’re plant-eaters, some standing upright on two legs and some on four. Wow!”

“Let me see,” said Banjo. He aimed the binoculars to

the swamp. “Yep ... looks like a couple different kinds of duck-billed dinosaurs. Parasaurolophus and ... maybe Corythosaurus, too. It’s hard to tell.”

“They look really different in real life, don’t they?” said Lee.

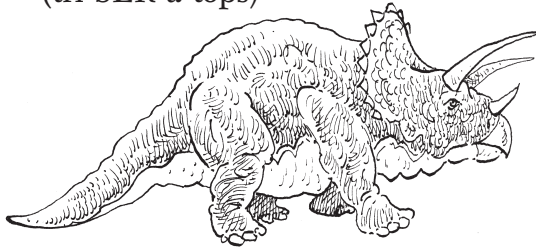
“Yeah, they do,” replied Banjo, “totally different. It’s kind of hard to tell which dinosaur is which.” Banjo scratched his head. Not only was it hard to figure the different types of dinosaurs, but he had seen a lot of dinosaurs that weren’t in his dinosaur books. “It must be hard to tell what dinosaurs really looked like when all you have is a bunch of old bones,” he said.

“This is so cool,” said Lee quietly. “Look up there! Are those Pteranodons?” he asked, as a flock of six of the huge creatures flew over them and into the valley without a sound. They were brown, tan and white in color and their bodies were covered with a fine fur.

“Oh, man, they sure are,” said Banjo. “They’ve gotta be twenty feet from wingtip to wingtip. Those are the biggest ones we’ve seen yet.”

“Twenty feet at least,” said Lee. “They look sort of like big pelicans. Hey, you don’t think they saw us, do you? They might try to snatch us off the ground.” Lee crouched

Triceratops
(tri-SER-a-tops)

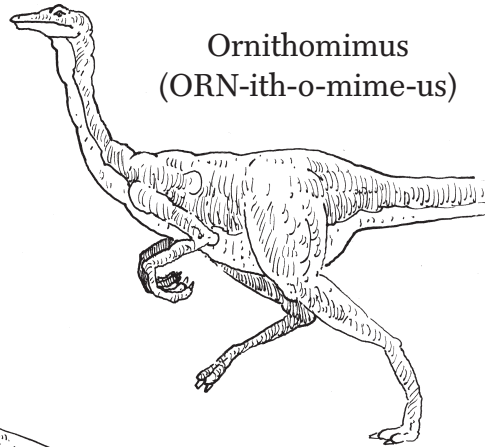


Pteranodon
(ter-AN-o-don)

Corythosaurus
(ko-RITH-o-sawr-us)



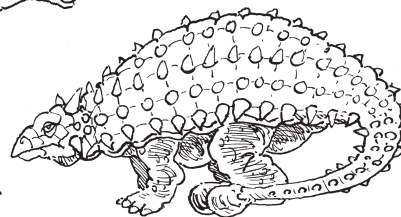
Ornithomimus
(ORN-ith-o-mime-us)



Parasaurolophus
(PAR-a-sawr-o-LOAF-us)



Ankylosaurus
(ANG-kil-o-sawr-us)



closer to the bushes, trying to blend in.

“I don’t think they can,” said Banjo. “I read somewhere that the Pteranodon with a twenty-three-foot wingspan only weighed something like thirty to fifty pounds. They couldn’t even pick up my little sister.”

“Too bad,” joked Lee, laughing.

“No kidding! She’s such a little brat sometimes,” said Banjo. Lee and Banjo had to really be careful so that five-year-old Cassie Montgomery didn’t find out about the time warp tunnel in the dog door or the whole world would know about it by the next day.

The boys were so busy talking and watching the herds of dinosaurs that they didn’t notice something moving slowly in the shadows of the forest behind them. But Dino had been watching and had started to sound out with a low warning growl. “Something’s coming,” he thought. Lee and Banjo turned around, scared out of their wits.

“Dino, get over here!” whispered Banjo urgently. He pulled Dino towards him by his leash, grabbed the dog and dove for cover into some nearby bushes, followed by Lee.

Something was making rustling noises in a tall patch of bushes between the boys and the forest and whatever it was, was getting close, really close. Dino let out another

low, warning growl.

“Shhh, Dino. No, shhh!” urged Banjo, putting his hand over Dino’s mouth. But trying to tell a Chow-Chow not to bark in defense of its owner is like trying to tell the wind not to blow, or a wave not to break. It was no use.

Dino barked twice. “Come closer and I’ll bite you!” he thought. “This is your last warning.”

The noise in the bushes stopped. The boys slowly poked their heads out of their hiding place to see what was there, trying not to make any noise. They watched for a few seconds when suddenly, from the bushes about ten feet away, four greenish heads with big yellow eyes popped up and looked around. One of the creatures stepped out into a clearing. It looked and acted very much like a dinosaur version of an ostrich—a big, eight-foot-tall, dusty green and brown, leathery-skinned ostrich with a long, lizard-like tail.

Both Banjo and Lee had been taught by their dads that if you run into a wild animal, stay calm and don’t make any sudden movements. Unfortunately, no one had ever taught this to Dino. He had a totally different idea, which was: when you run into a wild animal, do not stay calm, bark like crazy and chase it.

“Woo, woo, woo, woo, woo, woowooo!” barked Dino, who then leapt out of Banjo’s arms and into the air after the ostrich-like critters as far as his leash would let him. He pulled Banjo out of the bushes and onto the ground.

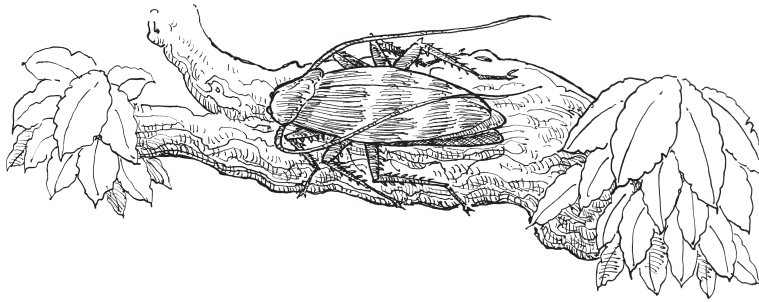
“No, Dino! No, stay down. Down, boy, down!” yelled Banjo, trying to get control over Dino and holding onto the leash as hard as he could. Dino dragged Banjo out of the bushes like a rag doll. “Let’s get ’em!” thought Dino. “Woo, woo, woowooof.”

Lee, seeing that their cover was blown, grabbed his slingshot, found some good-sized rocks and prepared to do battle. He drew back the slingshot’s pouch with rock in place and got ready to fire.

“A slingshot against four eight-foot-tall dinosaurs. Not my idea of a fair fight,” complained Lee out loud. He leapt out of his hiding place and took careful aim at the strange green creature in the clearing, preparing for the worst. “This better work. My mom will kill me if I get eaten,” he mumbled.

Chapter Four

Welcome to The Food Chain



In a matter of seconds Banjo had jumped back to his feet and gotten control of Dino, who was still barking like crazy. Lee was standing, feet spread wide, ready to shoot the dinosaurs with his slingshot, in case they attacked.

“BACK OFF, BIRD FACE!” he screamed as loudly as he could. Lee was an excellent shooter with a slingshot. If he had to shoot the dinosaur he could hit it all right. But would that stop it? It might just make it mad. “Oh, well, it’s

better than nothing,” he thought.

What happened next was completely unexpected. The four ostrich-like dinosaurs were so frightened by Dino’s barking and the two boys jumping up suddenly in their camouflage clothes that they took off running, making a noise that sounded like a cross between a screaming girl and a car horn.

“What the hey ... ?” said Banjo, confused.

“*Woo, woof!*” said Dino. “Come back here you, you ... big lizard ... things!” he thought. “Come back, cowards.”

“Look at ’em go,” exclaimed Lee. The dinosaurs sped away so fast that they were out of sight in a matter of seconds, running and leaping back into the forest, screaming and honking all the way.

“What do you think they were?” asked Lee, his hands still shaking. He had never been that close to a dinosaur before—nobody had! “Some kind of ostrich dinosaur, I think,” he added.

“Yeah, they looked like *Ornithomimus* to me,” replied Banjo, “because they didn’t have any teeth. Yep, that’s what I think. Paleontologists say they probably ate plants, berries, lizards, insects and stuff.”

“Not kids or crazy Chow-Chow dogs,” said Lee,

laughing with relief.

“Good boy, Dino. Good boy,” said Banjo, as he hugged the big fluffy dog. Dino licked Banjo’s face and wagged his tail in response. “If you let me off this leash I’ll bring one of those things back to you,” he thought.

“He makes a good dinosaur early warning system,” added Lee. “I’m sure glad he’s with us.”

“Me, too,” said Banjo. “He scared the heck out of those things.”

The boys took a few minutes to settle their nerves and to figure out what to do next.

“Okay, I say that we go along the edge of the forest in that direction,” said Banjo, pointing to the place from which the ostrich dinosaurs had come. “I figure since those dinosaurs came from there it must be clear of meat-eaters,” he added.

“You hope,” said Lee in a worried voice. “But it sounds like an okay plan. Then we can cut across the forest and back to the clearing where the time warp tunnel is.”

“Perfect,” said Banjo. “Then we’ll head home. That’ll be enough exploring for me today.”

“Me, too,” replied Lee. “Let’s stay on Red Alert, though. I don’t want any more surprises. We were lucky those

ostrich dinosaurs weren't meat-eaters. My mom will freak if I get eaten."

"Okay," said Banjo. "Everybody on Red Alert. Let's move out, be real quiet and stay low."

The boys proceeded along the forest's edge like comandos in a jungle, slingshots ready. Dino was in front, sniffing the way. As they moved along they saw lots of small lizard-like creatures and bugs, big giant bugs.

"Your sister would love this place," whispered Lee, jokingly, after seeing a huge cockroach-like insect dart in front of them. Cassie Montgomery hated bugs. They made her scream.

"Maybe we'll catch one of these bugs and give it to her as a pet," snickered Banjo. He'd love to see the look on her face when she saw a prehistoric cockroach the size of a cat. "That would be so funny," he added.

"Until your mom found out," said Lee, "then we'd both be in trouble. Then my mom would find out and I'd be grounded until I was twenty-one years old!"

After a short while they decided it was time to cut across the forest and hike towards the clearing. They didn't want to get too far from where the time warp tunnel was and get lost. About two hundred feet into the forest the

boys began to smell something. Something so terrible they had to hold their noses.

“Oh, geeez,” said Banjo. “There’s that smell again. That’s soooo bad!”

“What stinks?” asked Lee. “It smells like when my hamster died, only a million times worse.”

“It’s the same smell we ran into right outside the time warp tunnel only stronger,” recalled Banjo.

They hiked on cautiously until they came to a small break in the trees. There they saw what had been causing the smell.

“Eeewww,” said Lee, in a hushed voice. “What the heck is that?”

Dino was snorting, trying to get the bad smell out of his nose. “PU. Another dead lizard thing!” he thought.

“Not what *is* it,” replied Banjo, holding his nose and frowning, “but what *was* it?”

They could see a huge set of rib bones sticking up out of slashed and torn flesh and skin. There was a foot here, a leg there. It was hard to see through the millions of bugs and flies all over the dead creature. One thing was for sure, this had once been a big dinosaur.

In addition to the bugs, there were about ten or more

dinosaur scavengers, of all different sizes. Some were as small as a rat, some as big as a deer, viciously tearing at the poor dead beast in a feeding frenzy, like sharks in the ocean.

“Whatever killed that had to be big,” said Banjo.

“Maybe it’s the same one that made those tracks we saw. I’ll bet it’s a Tyrannosaurus,” said Lee.

“Whatever it is, I don’t wanna run into it. Let’s sneak around this mess,” whispered Banjo. He was really starting to worry that maybe they had gotten in way over their heads. “This could be big trouble,” he thought, shaking his head.

“Okay,” replied Lee. “The clearing is over that way. I figure about five or six hundred feet.”

The boys proceeded more quietly and carefully than ever, making their way past the poor dead beast, making sure they weren’t spotted by the feeding scavengers. They finally moved up-wind from the horrible odor of rotting flesh.

“Phew,” sighed Lee, with relief. “Glad we’re away from that smell. Yuck!”

“Oh, man, that stunk so bad it almost made me barf,” said Banjo, rubbing his nose. “I sure hope that dead



dinosaur died of old age. Yeah, that's it. Maybe it died of old age."

"I hope so," mumbled Lee.

The idea of that made the boys not feel so scared. Maybe it did die of old age and not a Tyrannosaurus.

"Banjo, look, there's the edge of the forest," said Lee excitedly. "Right through those tall bushes is the clearing and the time warp tunnel. We're almost there."

"Great," sighed Banjo, who was looking forward to getting home almost as much as Lee was.

The boys made it to the tall bushes with no problem. They stopped for a moment and observed the bushes very closely for a time to make sure nothing was hiding in them, waiting to pounce.

"Looks clear," whispered Lee. "Let's go through, then when we get to the clearing we'll run to the tunnel as fast as we can, and before anything can touch us we'll be outta here!"

"Right, good plan," said Banjo. They plunged into the bright green bushes with Dino in the lead. About half way through they could see parts of the clearing, but Lee saw something else.

"What's that big rock?" thought Lee. "I don't remem-

ber any big rock in the clearing. Oh, well, we're almost home ..."

Suddenly Dino stopped dead in his tracks, his tail went down between his legs and his ears went back. He started to back up as if he were trying to get away from something. He was whimpering. "Not these things again. I hate these things," he thought. "We gotta get outta here! We gotta turn around, Banjo!"

"What's wrong with Dino?" asked Lee.

"Don't know. But he's really scared," said Banjo. "I've never seen him this scared. Something's wrong."

"Red Alert," whispered Lee.

"Right," said Banjo. "Red Alert."

They carefully crawled the last twenty feet to the edge of the thick bushes on their hands and knees and slowly pulled back a branch to see what could be scaring Dino.

"Oh, no," whispered Banjo in a voice almost too quiet to hear.

Outside the bushes, in the middle of the clearing, right between them and the time warp tunnel, was their worst dinosaur nightmare. There in the clearing, lying on their stomachs, lazily dozing in the sun, was not one but two forty-five-foot long-TYRANNOSAURS!

Chapter Five

Tyrannosaurus Forest: Trespassers Will Be Eaten



Although Lee and Banjo had just come across the two Tyrannosaurs in the clearing, Dino had known they were around for some time. His sensitive dog nose and ears had told him so. Their strange meat-eater smell and their heavy breathing were obvious to a dog.

Dino was hanging back behind the boys as far as his leash would allow, his tail between his legs, quietly whimpering. He wanted to get out of there NOW! These were

the creatures that he'd almost been eaten by twice before but because he was smarter and faster at cutting corners he barely escaped, with some help from a friend, back into the safety of the time warp tunnel—minus a little tail hair.

If the frightened dog could talk he would have told Banjo and Lee that, “This forest is Tyrannosaurus territory. STAY OUT! I can’t protect you here.” The fact that the boys hadn’t run into the big meat-eaters on their previous trips through the time warp tunnel was just pure luck. The huge beasts must have been out hunting at the time the boys were there.

Oh, one other thing Dino would have mentioned, “Along with those two big Tyrannosaurs, somewhere around here are three Tyrannosaurus babies. These six-foot-tall ‘babies’ are the ones that almost got me. They’re always hungry, always mean and always looking for something to eat. Dead or alive. So let’s get out of here NOW, NOW, NOW!”

Dino tugged on his leash, but Banjo and Lee had all their attention fixed on the two monsters before them. They didn’t even notice him. They just lay there staring in fear and amazement.

Dino had to do something. “Come on, Banjo. Don’t just

sit there,” he thought. He did the only thing he knew to get Banjo’s attention. He quietly crept up and licked Banjo on the ear, then on his face, and kept on licking until ...

“Eeewww, yuck, Dino! What do you want?” whispered Banjo, trying to push the dog away.

“I want us to *leave!*” thought Dino.

“I think he wants us to get out of here,” said Lee, still staring at the clearing. “I think he’s run into these guys before; that’s why he’s so scared.”

Dino whined and tugged on the leash again. “Let’s go. LET’S GO! The babies. We’ve got to leave before the babies sniff us out!” he thought desperately. “People have no sense at all!”

“I wonder if there’re any more of these things around?” whispered Banjo.

“Could be,” replied Lee. “Maybe these things live in packs like wolves or big families or something.”

It was no wonder that the boys couldn’t take their eyes off the two Tyrannosaurs. They’d seen so many Tyrannosaurus pictures, skeletons, even a full-sized Tyrannosaurus model that moved. But nothing, *nothing* compared to seeing a real living and breathing Tyrannosaurus Rex.



The two giants were lying facing each other, eyes closed, taking an afternoon nap. Their skin color and texture looked very much like that of a modern crocodile. On top they were different shades of brown with uneven, dark brown and black stripes. Their underbellies seemed to be tan or light brown. One of the Tyrannosaurs was darker over all than the other.

“Maybe the dark one’s the male and the light one’s the female,” thought Banjo. Even as big as they were, their coloring made them a little hard to see when they weren’t moving.

“Psst! Banjo, snap out of it,” Lee whispered. “We can’t stay here all day. Somehow we gotta sneak around them.”

“Yeah ... yeah, okay,” replied Banjo. “Geez, I hope there aren’t any more of those things.”

Much to Dino’s relief, the boys slowly and quietly inched away from the edge of the clearing and back through the bushes. “Finally!” he thought.

“Okay, now which way do we go?” asked Banjo, who was thinking out loud to himself. He couldn’t remember being this scared. He felt like screaming. “Stay calm,” he thought. “Stay calm. This is no time to freak out.”

“I’ve got an idea,” said Lee.

“Good,” replied Banjo. “What is it?”

“I say we follow the edge of the clearing, while staying under cover, around the side closest to the valley. See?” said Lee as he drew a simple map in the dirt. “Then we’ll sneak up through the bushes next to the time warp tunnel and charge across the last five feet into the tunnel.”

“Sounds good. Let’s go,” replied Banjo hastily. “If we get out of this alive I’ll never call Lee a scaredy-cat again,” he thought.

“Load your slingshot and have it ready,” said Lee.

Banjo did so without argument, even though a slingshot against two huge Tyrannosaurs seemed like a really, really stupid idea.

The boys started off, carefully and quietly making their way around the edge of the clearing, staying well out of sight. The Tyrannosaurs were snoozing away. They made quick progress around the edge of the clearing.

“Good,” whispered Banjo, “we’re past ’em. Everything’s going as planned.” They crept on until they were about forty feet from the entrance of the time warp tunnel. They were on the other side of the clearing now. Their view of the Tyrannosaurs was partially blocked by some plants in the clearing. They continued to move clos-

er to the tunnel entrance. Everything was fine until...

CRACK! went the sound of a breaking branch—a branch that Banjo had stepped on.

“Oh, no! Oh, no! Oh, no!” said Banjo under his breath. “That was so stupid. How could I have done that?”

“Oh, that was not good!” thought Dino. “People are so clumsy. Soooo clumsy.”

“Get down. Don’t move, and be quiet!” said Lee.

The boys crouched in the bushes and froze, their eyes glued on the huge dinosaurs. An instant later, from behind a bush near the lighter-colored T-Rex, a head popped up. It was not the huge head of a full-grown beast, but a smaller version. An exact copy of the bigger ones—a baby Tyrannosaurus.

“Uh-ohh,” said both Lee and Banjo at the same time.

To make things worse, another head popped up, and then another. There were now three baby Tyrannosaurs, and they were coming towards the boys to investigate the noise Banjo had made.

Lee, Banjo and Dino carefully slid farther back into the underbrush as the three babies came closer. They looked just like their parents, except that they were only about six feet tall. Still, they had the teeth and muscles to make a

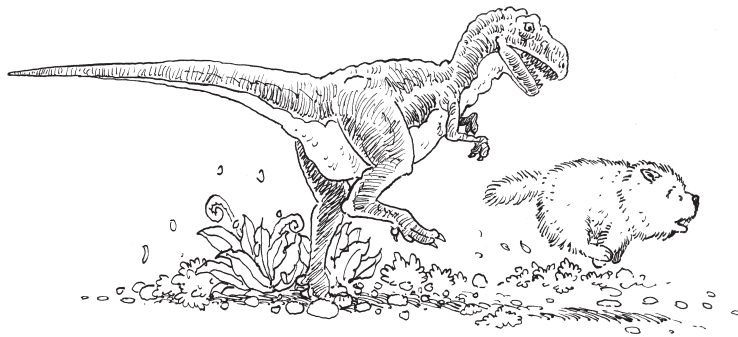
quick meal out of two small boys and one very hairy dog. They acted like chickens looking for a worm, cocking their heads back and forth and looking around with short, jerky movements. They walked cautiously, step by step, moving closer and closer to the boys' hiding place in the thick bushes.

Banjo gave a hand signal to move deeper into the cover of the brush. But as they did, they were spotted by the baby prehistoric hunters.

"I tried to warn you," thought Dino. "Now we've got a problem. A *big* problem!"

Chapter Six

Prehistoric Hornet's Nest



The baby Tyrannosaurs lowered their heads, focusing in on the boys' hiding place, and moved cautiously toward them. They didn't just jump in and attack. Even baby Tyrannosaurs had enemies, and whatever these things were they had a strange and unfamiliar smell. This made the Tyrannosaurs very cautious.

"Shoot! They know we're here," said Banjo.

"No. Let's get the heck outta here," said Lee.

“Good idea,” thought Dino. “Should have thought of that earlier.”

So, while keeping an eye on the approaching dinosaur pack, Lee and Banjo and Dino began a silent but steady retreat, deeper and deeper into the jungle. The bushes were thick and hard to get through. “Good,” thought Banjo, “maybe this will slow them down.”

The Tyrannosaurs, seeing the boys move, quickened their pursuit a little. But they still kept their distance. A baby dinosaur didn’t survive in this world by blindly chasing unknown animals into heavy underbrush. There had been a fourth baby Tyrannosaurus once. It chased a baby Ankylosaurus (a four-legged, heavily armored plant-eater with a bony club at the end of its tail) through the forest and into a clearing where it was met by the baby’s angry mother. With one swipe of the mother Ankylosaurus’ heavy, clubbed tail the baby T-Rex was sent flying fifty feet across the clearing and into a tree. It was killed instantly, its entire rib cage caved in.

The boys were now very aware of the dangerous situation they were in and were trying to keep their cool and not panic. They stopped for a moment to figure out what to do. At the same time, the baby Tyrannosaurs stopped and

watched them closely.

“You know, Banjo, I could be wrong, but those things look a little scared of us,” said Lee.

“I was thinking the same thing,” said Banjo. “Look at them. They act like birds, you know. Kind of stupid and kind of scared.”

“Those things are *not* stupid!” thought a very nervous Dino. “I know. They’re smarter than you think.”

“Yeah, but let’s not underestimate them. They’re professional hunters, even if they are babies,” said Lee. “I think we can outsmart them somehow, though.”

“Okay, what are our options?” sighed Banjo, wiping the sweat from his freckled forehead.

“Well, we can’t stay here,” answered Lee. “I think we need to leave this area. They must have a limit to their territory. Also, they can’t stay in the clearing where the time warp tunnel is forever. They’ve gotta go eat.”

“Yeah,” said Banjo. “If we head in a straight line away from the clearing we won’t get lost. Then, after some time, we can sneak back to the clearing and do some reconnaissance to see if they’ve left yet.” Then Banjo had another idea. “You know, Lee, if we can’t ditch ’em, then we could head for the herd of Triceratops.”

“Triceratops ... are you nuts?” replied Lee in disbelief.

“No, really,” said Banjo. “We’d be safer there than with Tyrannosaurs. They’re both enemies, see?”

“I know,” argued Lee, “but the Triceratops might attack us, thinking we’re their enemies, too. I vote we try to lose ’em by getting out of their territory. I’ll bet these babies won’t go far from their parents and we’re probably too small to interest the two big Tyrannosaurs.”

“Agreed,” replied Banjo. “But let’s go now. They’re starting to come after us again.”

The T-Rexes were working their way through the bushes to get a closer look at Dino and the boys in hopes that they were edible. They were making squawking and clicking noises like they were talking to each other.

The boys clawed their way as straight and as fast as they could through the bushes with Dino out in front. The brush was getting even thicker than before. The Tyrannosaurs lunged into the tangled branches to try to catch up to the boys, snarling and hissing and clacking their teeth as they went. But the growth was too dense for them to get through.

“The thick bushes are slowing them down,” said Banjo, breathing heavily and looking over his shoulder.

“Keep going,” urged Lee, breathing hard as well. The

boys were both dripping with sweat; it was so hot and humid it was almost unbearable. They were getting scrapes on their arms from the tough bushes but they didn't care. They just kept going.

After crawling through the tangled brush for another fifty feet they came to another clearing. It appeared that they had gotten away from the Tyrannosaurs and the hungry babies had given up the chase.

"Yes!" exclaimed Banjo. "We've lost 'em!"

"Alright," said Lee, with relief. The boys slapped each other's hands. "Man, I thought we were dinner for those guys," Lee added.

"Hey, Lee, look over there," said Banjo, pointing to a number of large boulders and trees that formed a sort of protected area, like a fort. "Let's hide out there for a while."

"Okay, good," said Lee. "I could use a ..."

Lee was interrupted by a crashing noise over to their left. They turned and saw the three baby Tyrannosaurs in the clearing about a hundred feet away. They spotted the boys and started running towards them at full speed.

"Oh, no!" yelled Banjo. "They found a way around!"

"Run!" yelled Lee. "Go! Run! Move your buns!"

"I hate it when this happens," thought Dino. "I hope

my friend shows up soon or we're fresh meat."

The boys and Dino took off running as fast as they could, leaping over rocks and bushes. The dinosaur pack was moving fast, too, and was no more than fifty feet behind them now.

The boys made it to the boulders and trees first.

"Quick! Climb up that big rock over there," yelled Banjo. "I don't think they can climb. *Go, go!*"

The boys, helping Dino, scurried up the steep face of the rock as high as they could go, about fifteen feet above the ground. The T-Rexes charged to the base of the rock and stopped, growling furiously at their prey. One of them tried to leap up the face of the rock but he tumbled back down to the ground. Then another tried it also and failed. But they weren't going to give up the hunt. They looked around the base of the rock in an attempt to find a way up, all the time growling and snapping their jaws with those horrible teeth.

One of them crouched down low and, with the help of his small, sharp-clawed arms, started slowly inching up the rock's face.

"*Arf, arf, arf!*" Dino was barking like crazy, saliva flying out of his mouth. He wouldn't be taken without a fight. He hated those things. "*Arf, arf, arf!*" he continued barking.

“Stupid lizards,” he thought. “Get outta here!”

“Shoot it! Shoot it!” screamed Lee, who pulled out his slingshot and loaded it. Banjo did the same. Banjo got off the first shot. His rock just barely skimmed the top of the climbing dinosaur’s head. It flinched, shook its head, and hissed. But it still kept coming.

Then Lee stood up, pulled back the sling, took aim and ... THWACK!

“Got him! Right on the nose!” Lee yelled. The Tyrannosaurus let out a loud scream and tumbled back to the ground. Banjo took aim again ... THWACK! He hit one of the others, also on its nose. It let out the same painful scream as its brother, but louder. The babies backed off, a little stunned.

“Hit ’em in the nose!” yelled Banjo. “Keep firing. Keep ...”

Banjo was cut off by a roar so loud it was deafening. The boys looked towards the clearing from which they’d just come. There, charging at full speed, cutting through the brush like a hot knife through butter, and making the ground shake like an earthquake, were the full-grown Mr. and Mrs. Tyrannosaurus Rex, coming to the aid of their crying children.



Chapter Seven

Out of the Frying Pan And into the ...



The two boys and Dino were huddled together on top of their rock fortress. Dino was still barking madly, ready to fight, while Lee and Banjo sat frozen—their eyes wide with fear. The two angry parent Tyrannosaurs were charging at them at a frightening speed. Lee wondered how animals so large could move so fast.

The boys had run out of plans. Every available escape route was blocked by T-Rexes. What now? They felt as if

they had thrown rocks into the biggest hornet's nest of all time and now they were about to get stung by the worst killing machines ever invented: a mouth full of huge, sharp T-Rex teeth.

The parents approached the natural fortress of boulders and trees where their babies were. The female let out a strange, short, high-pitched call. The young Tyrannosaurs responded by running over to her side. She sniffed her babies and, sensing they were safe and unharmed, she nudged them gently and affectionately with her massive head, and licked another with her giant tongue.

Dino had stopped barking and was trying to hide in Banjo's arms. He was no match for these large monsters and he knew it. It was time to retreat.

"Don't move," whispered Banjo. "Mm ... m ... maybe they won't see us." He remembered something in a science fiction story about dinosaurs. Something about how dinosaur vision wasn't very good, or that they can only see things that moved. He desperately hoped it was true.

Lee didn't answer. He just closed his eyes and prayed that he wouldn't get eaten, that someday, somehow they would get out of this alive.

While the female Tyrannosaurus was looking after her

children, the male approached the boulder where the boys were. He cocked his head to one side and squinted his enormous eye. He wasn't sure what this creature or creatures in front of him were, but somehow they caused his children pain. This was unacceptable. He reared his huge head and let out a roar that made the boys cover their ears and scream. Then he opened his mouth wide, his six-inch teeth looking like rows of yellowish-white daggers, and lunged his head towards them. The boys felt the animal's hot, smelly breath surround them.

Instinctively the boys rolled to one side. SNAP! The jaws clamped shut, narrowly missing them. The T-Rex opened his mouth to attack again. It looked like it was over for the science team, and they would be the first humans to not only see a T-Rex but to be eaten by one.

Then something happened—so fast, it was like a dream. Just before the T-Rex clamped his jaws shut upon them, the boys felt something grab them from behind. The next thing they knew, Lee and Banjo, with Dino held securely in Banjo's arms, were floating through the air, up and away from the top of the rock.

The father Tyrannosaurus was furiously trying to leap up the rock face and into the sky to grab the escaping trou-

blemakers. But neither the boys nor Dino were going to be a Tyrannosaurus snack that day.

Banjo and Lee didn't know what to think. One second they were feeling the hot, smelly breath of the male Tyrannosaurus all around them; the next second they're floating away from the scene, high into the air.

"Maybe we're dead," thought Lee, "and our spirits have left our poor bodies in the stomach of that beast down there."

"Banjo ... are we dead?" Lee sputtered, almost afraid to ask.

"Don't be ridiculous," said a strange British-sounding voice behind them. "You Earth people have such overactive imaginations. You are not dead, thanks to me."

Lee looked at Banjo. Banjo looked back at Lee. "Don't look at me," Banjo whispered. "I didn't say nothin'."

"If you didn't say it, who did?" said Lee, not bothering to lower his voice.

"Why, I did, of course," said the voice again. "Just sit tight and I'll have you safe and sound in a moment. Honestly, throwing rocks at those giant beasts. Do Earth people have no sense at all? Insanity, pure insanity, I tell you!"

The boys floated on. They couldn't turn around, as they

were being held firmly by some kind of force. They were floating back towards the clearing where the time warp tunnel was. The Tyrannosaurus family watched them float over for a short time. The big male looked up and let out a final ear-splitting roar of warning before they all headed into the cover of the forest.

“This is getting way too weird for me,” sighed Banjo. “Way too weird.”

“What is going on here?” yelled Lee, who was very frustrated and confused.

“Just be calm. I’ll answer all your questions soon enough,” replied the voice.

Dino was quite happy now, wagging his tail. He was enjoying the view and was very glad to be away from the angry Tyrannosaurs. He barked at them one more time as they went into the forest. “Those stinking lizards,” Dino thought. He was very glad to hear the British-sounding voice. He’d heard it before. That was Dino’s friend who had helped him get back home through the time warp tunnel a number of times before when the Tyrannosaurs were chasing him.

“No worries now,” he thought, “we’re in good hands. Maybe my friend will have a biscuit for me ... mmmmm.”



Dino licked his lips. "I love biscuits."

"Yes, Dino, my friend. I have biscuits for you," said the voice.

The boys and Dino were carried to a spot directly behind the time warp tunnel. It was a tall clump of rocks, trees and bushes. As they approached it, the voice from behind gave a command in a language the boys had never heard. "DOSO TOSAGO," it said. Just then the clump of rocks, trees and bushes disappeared and revealed a large shiny metal sphere nearly five hundred feet across.

"Whoaaa! A space ship!" exclaimed Lee.

"What? No way. This is a dream. It's gotta be a dream," said Banjo, who pinched himself, trying to figure out whether he was asleep or awake, dead or alive.

The voice gave another command, again in the strange language, "EESHA BAH."

In response to the voice's command, a door on the top of the big, shiny metal sphere opened; there was a swooshing sound of air as it did. Dino and the boys went down through the door and into the object. The air inside smelled clean, cool and dry.

Then came a third command from the voice, "DENJA BAH." In an instant the door on the top of the sphere slid

shut, with Dino and the boys inside.

“We’ve been kidnapped by aliens!” screamed Lee. “They’re going to use us as guinea pigs in some weird alien experiment. We’re doomed. Oh, geez, why did I ever go through the stupid time warp tunnel? Banjo, why’d you bring us here?”

“How was I supposed to know there were aliens here?” Banjo yelled back. “At least we’re not in the stomach of that stupid psycho Tyrannosaurus!”

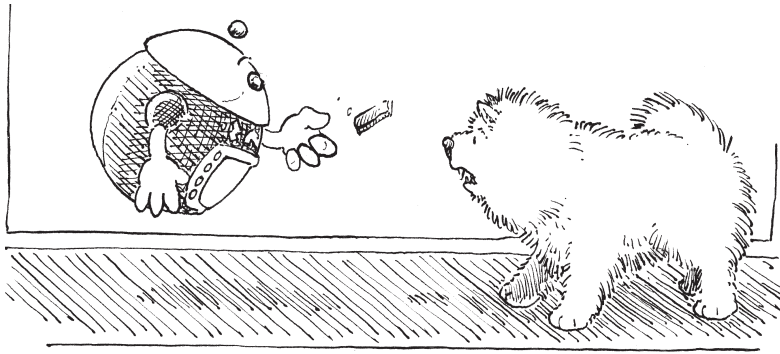
While the boys were arguing, they were set down onto a soft floor and the force field that held them in place was turned off.

“Will you two stop arguing this instant!” said the voice. “You have *not* been kidnapped and any experiment on you would be a waste of good research time. We know more about you Earth people than you Earth people know about yourselves,” scolded the voice further. Then from behind the boys, out of the shadows, came the source of the strange, British-sounding voice. The thing—whatever it was—floated out in front of them.

The boys stopped arguing instantly. Their mouths opened wide with amazement. “No way, this can’t be real,” mumbled Banjo. “First dinosaurs, and now ... *this!*”

Chapter Eight

Meet A.R.B.-EE



Dino ran up to the floating thing with the British-sounding voice. Banjo and Lee were too stunned to do anything but stare. Banjo thought that maybe his dog was going to attack it, until he saw Dino wagging his tail. He wasn't angry, he was happy.

"Well, well!" said the thing, "Dino, my old friend. Good to see you, good to see you indeed." Then it gave the dog a big hug with its short arms. Dino licked the thing on the face.

“Boy, am I glad to see you!” thought Dino. “We were in big trouble out there!”

“I guess that’s its face,” thought Banjo.

“Out chasing those beasts again, I see,” it said to the happy dog.

“*Woo, woof,*” replied Dino. “Five of them,” he thought, “except, they were kind of chasing us.”

“Five of them! Well, how about a nice biscuit for the mighty beastly hunter, eh?” it asked.

“*Woof,*” replied Dino, sitting up and wagging his tail. “Yes, a biscuit!”

“Very good,” it replied. It raised its hand and there, out of nowhere, appeared a brown rectangle that looked like a big dog biscuit. It tossed the biscuit to Dino, who caught it and ate it without hesitation, his big fluffy tail wagging away.

The thing floated towards the boys after patting Dino on the head. They could see clearly now what this thing was, or what it looked like, anyway.

It was about three feet tall and was oval-shaped. It had two short arms with four fat fingers on both of its big hands. There was no neck, really, just a groove between its body and its head. There weren’t any legs, either; it just floated where it wanted to go. But it did have eyes. They

looked like two red light bulbs, and above them were two red eyebrows that could move to show expression. There was no nose or mouth at all. Across its chest were some alien-looking markings and below that was some sort of computer keyboard. Its body was bright red and its head and arms were yellow.

“It’s some kind of weird floating, egg-shaped, alien robot,” mumbled Lee.

“Yeah ... weird ... alien ...” Banjo mumbled back.

“Oh, no! I am not a robot, as you call it. I am an A.R.B.-EE series,” it replied in a friendly voice.

“A who?” questioned Banjo, with a frown.

“An A.R.B.-EE series,” it repeated. “The ‘A’ stands for ‘Animated’, which means alive. ‘R.B.’ stands for ‘Replicated Body’, which means my body was ‘built,’ not ‘grown’ like yours. And it’s the latest model, the ‘EE’ series. Got that?”

“I guess,” replied Banjo.

“In my civilization we do not have names,” it went on, “but I know your civilization does, so just call me Arbee ... yes, that will be fine. Arbee. Is that acceptable to you?”

“Lee and Banjo,” said Lee.

“What do you mean?” asked Arbee, looking slightly confused.

“My name’s Lee and his name is Banjo,” explained Lee.

“Oh? Ohhh, yes! Your names, of course. Well, Lee ... Banjo, I am pleased to meet you,” said Arbee. Arbee gently shook the boys’ hands. He could see they were scared. “I probably look as strange to them as they do to me. Earth people are not used to seeing beings from other planets,” he thought, “and they get very upset when they do. Many of them actually think they’re the only living beings in the universe. If they only knew ...”

“His hand feels like some sort of warm plastic or glass,” thought Lee, who was trying to figure out who this Arbee character was and how much danger they might be in.

“How do you know my dog?” asked Banjo.

“Your dog?” questioned Arbee. “Oh, you mean Dino. He is what you call a dog. Yes ... Dino ... well, Dino was being chased by those baby creatures ... what do you call them?”

“Dinosaurs?” said Banjo.

“That’s it, dinosaurs. The word comes from the Earth language known as ‘Ancient Greek’ and means ‘terrible lizard.’ Some time ago I managed to tap into several Earth computer systems and learn a number of Earth languages, including your current language, English. I must say it is a very confusing language indeed, even with a complete dic-

tionary and grammar information available to me.”

“I know,” said Banjo. “I barely understand it and I live here. But how do you know Dino?”

“Yes, I was getting to that. Patience, my boy, patience.” Arbee went on, “I saw Dino come through the time warp tunnel. I knew he wasn’t native to this time, so I watched him. He was running around, sniffing away until he ran into the baby dinosaurs. It wasn’t long before he was trapped and about to be eaten. So I rescued him the way I rescued you. He had some sort of tag around his neck that said ‘Dino.’ That’s how I deduced his name. Although he was only gone for ten minutes from your time in the present, he was here for ten days in the past because time is slower here.”

“Yeah, we know,” interrupted Lee. “I figured out the time difference. One minute in the present equals one day in the past.”

“Lee’s real good in math and science,” added Banjo, nodding.

“I can see!” exclaimed Arbee. “Very good, Lee. Very good indeed! When I was sure it was safe, I took Dino back to the entrance of the time warp tunnel and let him go home. But he kept coming back day after day! He must like the dog

biscuits I made for him. We've been great friends ever since. He's very smart, you know. He's told me all about you two."

"What do you mean?" asked Banjo.

"Dino has told me all about you, Lee, your family ..." said Arbee.

"Wait, are you telling me you can read my dog's thoughts?" asked Banjo.

"Why, yes, I can," answered Arbee. "As I said, he's a very bright fellow. Oh, by the way, he really hates the dog food you've been feeding him."

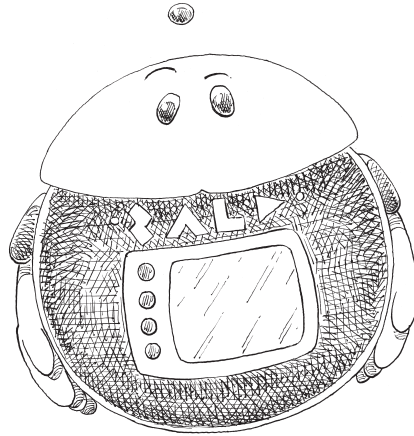
"He does?" asked Banjo.

"Yes. It upsets his stomach and he thinks it smells bad, like — what's the word he used?"

"Poop," thought Dino. "It smells like poop!"

"Ah, yes! Thank you, Dino," said Arbee. "He thinks it smells like poop."

"Whoa!" sighed Banjo, as he looked at Dino. "Sorry, boy."



“And he wants you to stop squirting him with your squirtgun, too. He doesn’t like that either,” added Arbee.

The boys were amazed.

“So, can you talk to all animals?” asked Banjo.

“Only if they talk to me,” said Arbee. “You know, send me their thoughts.”

“Hmmm,” said Lee. “So you must’ve known we were coming through the time warp tunnel, too, huh? From Dino?”

“Yes, I did. Dino let me know you were coming. But I was hoping you would look around and go home as you did several times before. Instead, you got into a fight with a family of the most vicious creatures on the entire planet. What were you thinking?”

“Hey, that’s not true!” interrupted Banjo. “They came after us. We were just defending ourselves.”

“Defending yourselves? With those silly little rock shooters?” asked Arbee, shaking his head with disbelief. “That’s madness.”

“It’s all we had!” added Lee in their defense. “We’re just kids. We’re not allowed to carry real weapons, like machine guns and stuff.”

“Machine guns, I see,” said Arbee. “Most interesting.”

“Yeah,” agreed Banjo, “if we’d had a flame thrower those dinosaurs would’ve been toast. But we’re just kids, it’s against the law for us to have flame throwers.”

“Flame throwers,” repeated Arbee, “I see ... well, it’s probably better that you didn’t use a ‘machine gun’ or a ‘flame thrower’ on those babies. Because if you had managed to kill any of them, I promise you the parents would have stopped at nothing to kill you, machine guns or not. Dinosaurs are very protective of their young. You must realize this world you are in is ruled by dinosaurs, not people like you. They lasted for millions of years for a reason. They are very tough characters indeed.”

“You don’t need to tell me,” agreed Lee. “Those were the scariest things I’d ever seen. I thought we were dead for sure.”

“I thought they were cool,” said Banjo. “Real dinosaurs!”

“You wouldn’t say that if you were in their stomachs,” added Lee. “We were almost Tyrannosaurus burgers.”

“Well, at least you’re safe now,” Arbee sighed. “You had me scared for a moment there. I would hate to see anyone get hurt because of a time warp I created.”

“Well ... thanks for saving us,” said Banjo.

“Yeah ... thanks,” Lee said.

“You’re welcome,” said Arbee. “Tell me, why haven’t any full grown Earth people come through the time warp tunnel?”

“The opening is too small and me, Lee and Dino are the only ones that know about it,” said Banjo.

“Good,” said Arbee. “The last thing I need is to alert your planet’s authorities. They can be quite hostile.”

“So why did you create this time warp tunnel, and where are you from?” asked Banjo.

“I am from the planet Izikzah, about one hundred light years away,” replied Arbee. “My civilization is doing scientific research on the ancient histories of the planets in this part of the galaxy, including your solar system. We are a race of teachers and librarians. We gather data from everywhere and make it available to thousands of other planets and civilizations, you see? It is quite fascinating, the things I’m learning. For example, did you know that your neighboring planet Mars used to have life on it?”

“No way! Really?” Banjo said with excitement.

“It’s true,” said Arbee. “My civilization has learned how to travel back in time with our specially designed starships by using some of the forces that surround a planet.

Sometimes, because of rock formations with metal in them or even certain metal structures that I fly over, a time warp tunnel to the past is created. It stays open as long as my ship is here. That's what you three came through. It's the first time live people have come through any of the warp tunnels I created by accident."

"Wow," whispered Banjo, "we're the first."

"You are the first," repeated Arbee. "I must be more careful. I could have gotten you hurt or, worse yet, killed. Tell me, what sort of structure did the time warp tunnel form in?"

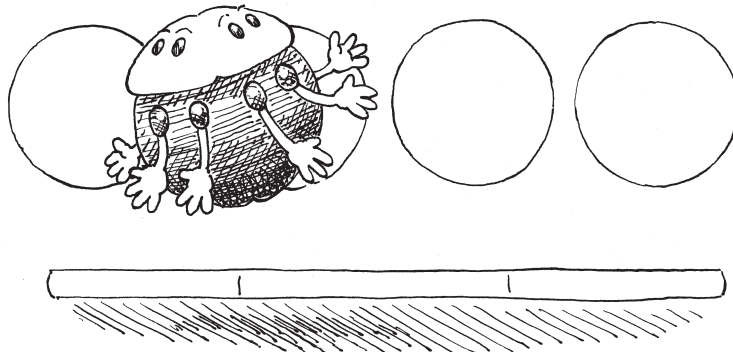
"Dino's doggie door," replied Banjo. "My dad used some new kind of metal to make it out of."

Lee looked at Arbee. He was chewing on his fingernails, frowning and was obviously very worried.

"Are you aliens planning to invade our planet?" Lee asked. "And now that we know all this time travel stuff, are you gonna kill us so we won't tell?"

Chapter Nine

He Kills Us ... He Kills Us Not



Arbee floated for a moment with a look of disbelief. Then he laughed. “Invade Earth, you say? What in blazes would we do with it? What do you Earth people have that we could possibly want?”

“Gold!” blurted Lee, in an angry voice.

“Gold? ... Rubbish!” exclaimed Arbee. “We can make enough gold to cover this entire planet if we want to. Our scientists have the ability to change the structure of any

atom or molecule. Gold indeed.”

“How about slave labor?” asked Banjo. “How about that? Huh?”

“Slave labor?” said Arbee, shaking his head. “With the help of this starship, my assistant and I can do the work of five to ten thousand Earth people, and our bodies last two to three hundred times longer. No offense, but we don’t need you. Besides, slave labor has been against our laws for tens of thousands of years. And what would a race of librarians do with slaves? That’s silly.”

“Hmmm,” said Lee. “You could use Earth as a base, couldn’t you?”

“A base, you say? A base for what?” argued Arbee. He floated over to a wall and touched it. There before the boys’ eyes flared a three-dimensional picture of the Milky Way galaxy.

“Wow!” the boys exclaimed as they jumped back.

“Woof!” Dino barked. “Cool special effects,” he thought.

Arbee pointed to a small blinking red light on the edge of the galaxy. “We are here, you see? This is your solar system. And in that system is your planet, Earth.”

Close to the middle of the galaxy appeared a lot of blue

lines going all the way around. Earth was far away from any of these lines. “These blue lines are the major space ways,” explained Arbee. “Your solar system is too far off these routes to be of any use as a base. Besides, our starships can travel faster than one hundred light years an hour, so we have no use for a base in this area.”

“Space ways?” exclaimed Banjo. “You mean there’re other planets with people on them?”

“Well, yes. Many thousands,” explained Arbee. “It’s just that Earth is in a part of the galaxy that is sort of a desert. There is not a lot of life around here.”

“Geez, all those people out there,” said Lee. “Have any of them come to Earth?”

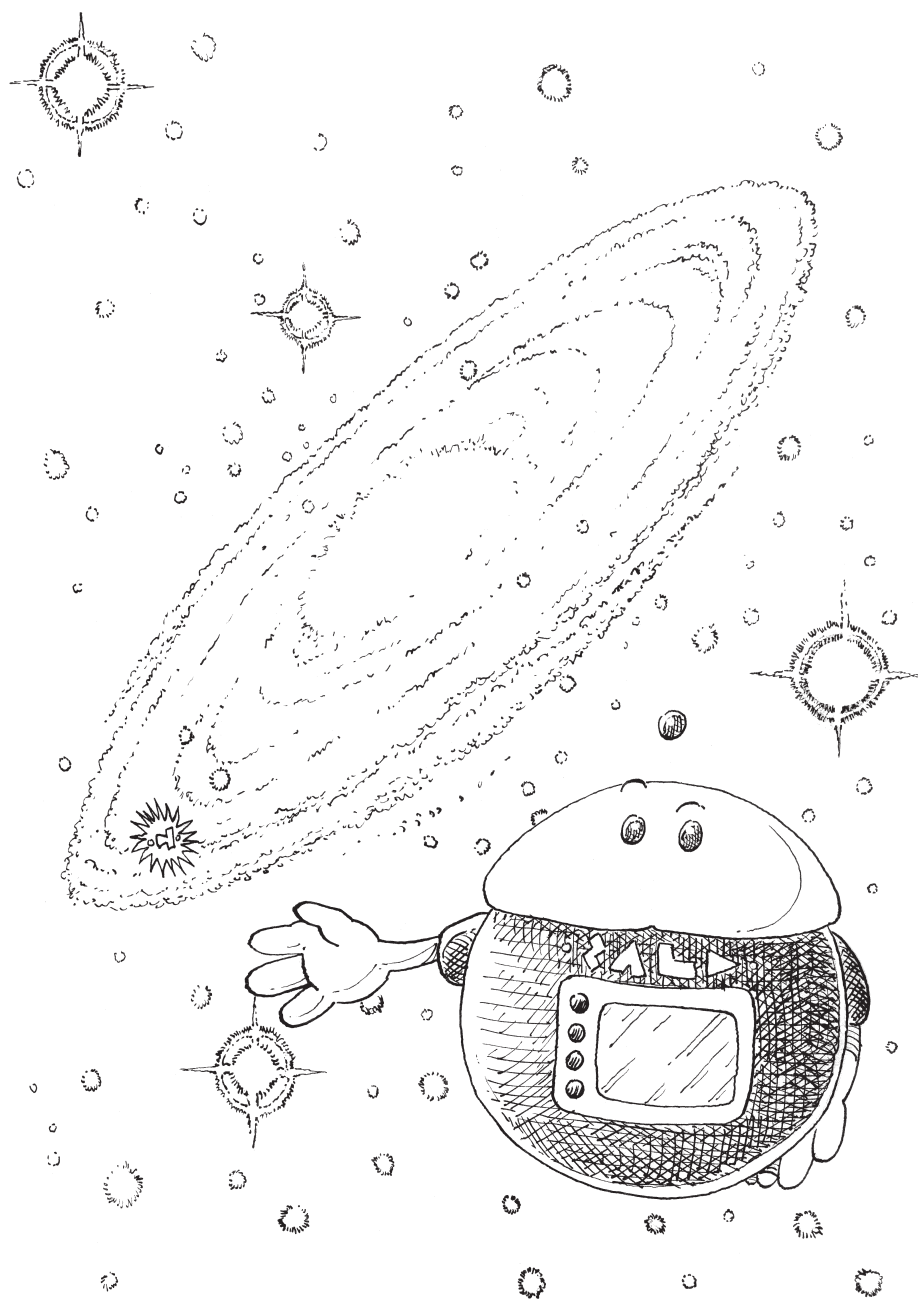
“Oh, I’m sure many of them have,” answered Arbee. “Earth is on all the star charts. But peaceful advanced civilizations usually stay away from a planet at your stage of development.”

“Why?” asked Banjo.

“You have to get through your atomic age. You have to advance past the point of blowing yourselves up or destroying your planet in other ways,” said Arbee.

“You mean, like pollution and stuff?” asked Lee.

“Right. That and other things,” said Arbee. “Until



then... well, you are dangerous to yourselves and anybody else nearby. Your civilization is just too unstable. I hope I did not insult you. It is just the way things work. I, for one, hope you make it. Earth would make a nice vacation planet, I think. Quite beautiful. I would hate to see you blow it up or ruin it."

"So... are you gonna kill us?" asked Banjo, in an excited voice.

"You sound like you're looking forward to it, Banjo," said Lee in disbelief.

"Lee, lighten up! This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance," replied Banjo.

"What? To get eaten by a Tyrannosaurus and shot by aliens?" argued Lee.

"Leeeee ... you know what I mean," moaned Banjo.

"Boys, boys, boys!" said Arbee, holding his hands up for them to be quiet. "The one thing that makes a civilization advanced is how they treat life or living things. If you treat living things like dirt or garbage or just a bunch of machines ... if you do not realize that life is the most important thing in the universe, more important than gold or chemicals or even planets, then POOF! No more civilization. It does not matter how many computers, how much

gold, weapons or spaceships you have. Understand?”

“I guess,” said Banjo. “This sounds like one of my dad’s lectures when I’ve been mean to my sister,” he thought.

Lee nodded his head but said nothing. He was still suspicious.

Dino was lying nearby, listening to Arbee. “Don’t waste your time,” he thought. “Humans are dumber than cats.”

“Right,” said Arbee. “My civilization knows living things are important. It is against our laws to murder or kill anything other than for self-defense. So the answer to your question is *no, I am not going to kill you!* If you went back and told the adult Earth people all about me or my ship, even the dinosaurs, especially without any proof, they would think you two were ... how do you say? ... insane, cuckoo, bonkers, nuts. They would lock you up and throw away the key.”

Banjo laughed. “See, Lee, what did I tell you?”

“Yeah, right,” sighed Lee. “But I still don’t know ...”

“Well, I’m not going to spend all day arguing with you,” interrupted Arbee. “I have a lot of work to do. My research is falling behind schedule. So I’ll give you a choice: you can either come along with me while I study those dinosaurs, perhaps even help a little; or I’ll drop you off at the

entrance to the time warp tunnel and you can go home now, and I'll tell you how to shut off the time tunnel at your end, so no one else can come through. You decide." Arbee just floated there, arms folded, waiting for an answer.

Lee and Banjo looked at each other. Lee didn't know what to think. He had nothing to compare this to except science fiction movies about evil, man-eating aliens. But Arbee was obviously not evil and, as a matter of fact, he didn't even have a mouth to eat with. They were confused.

"Conference," said Lee, finally.

Banjo and Lee huddled together and talked. "What are you thinking, Lee?" asked Banjo.

"Oh, geez, Banjo, this is strange. It's beyond strange," Lee whispered. "On the one hand I feel like running, but on the other ... we're the only people in the whole world that get to see UFOs and dinosaurs in one day. This is a big scientific discovery, probably the biggest discovery ever!"

"That's what I think," sighed Banjo. "This is too big to pass up. I think this Arbee guy is okay. If he wanted to, he could've just let the Tyrannosaurs eat us. But he saved us instead. He's so worried about us he sounds like my mother. Another thing is that Dino likes him, he really likes him a lot."

“Yeah, so what?” said Lee.

“Chow-Chows never like anybody that much unless it’s their owner or they’ve known them for a lot of years,” said Banjo.

“Maybe he just likes the dog biscuits,” Lee pointed out.

“No way,” said Banjo. “I’ve seen other people try to bribe Dino with dog biscuits, even hamburgers—and you know how much Dino likes hamburgers—and Dino wouldn’t eat them. He just barks at them. No, Dino can tell a bad guy right off. He’s got some sort of dog sense or something. I say we stay and learn as much as we can.”

“Okay ... me, too,” sighed Lee. “In the interest of science. But we’re staying on Red Alert the whole time,” he added in a stern voice. “I’m still not convinced that Robo Dude over there doesn’t have some evil plan to take over the earth.”

“Right,” exclaimed Banjo. “We stay ... on Red Alert the whole time, like you said.”

“Well,” said Arbee, “what have you decided?” He didn’t tell the boys that with his very sensitive hearing he had heard everything they said. This had to be their decision.

Lee stepped forward, and in his best official-sounding voice said, “Mr. Arbee, me and Banjo, in the interest of sci-

ence, have decided to stay and help you with your research, under two conditions. One, that you do not invade or in any way try to hurt us or the Earth. And two, that you get us home in time for dinner ... in one piece ... and alive, too.”

“Agreed,” replied Arbee. “I shall treat all three of you as scientific representatives from the planet Earth.”

“Okay, deal,” said Banjo. “Let’s shake on it.”

All of them shook hands, forming the first alliance between the planet Earth and the planet Izikzah (or any other planet, for that matter).

“This deal has to include lots of dog biscuits,” thought Dino.

“Dino, you shall have plenty of dog biscuits,” said Arbee. “So, now that we have agreed, let us proceed. There is much work to be done.

“ZINZU!” he called. From out of a darkened section of the ship came another, smaller oval-shaped being with eight red eyes in a circle around its head and eight small arms and hands in a circle around its waist. “Zinzu is my assistant,” explained Arbee.

“Hello and welcome aboard,” Zinzu said in a high, squeaky voice.

“Hi,” the boys replied.

Zinzu floated over to Dino. “Hello, Dino,” he squeaked, petting the happy dog on his head.

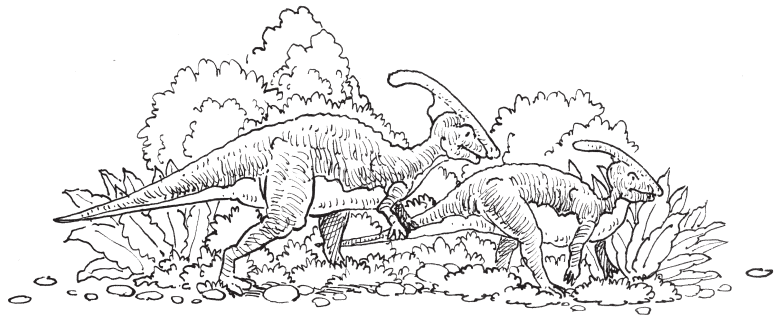
“Woof!” replied Dino. “Hi, Zinzu,” he thought.

“Zinzu, would you please prepare a shuttle craft,” said Arbee. “I’m taking our friends out to get a closer look at some of the local wildlife.”

“Right away,” replied Zinzu and he flew off to another part of the ship.

Chapter Ten

Death of a Duck-Billed Dinosaur



A short time later Zinzu's voice came over the ship's intercom, "Shuttle craft three is ready to launch, Arbee."

"Thank you," said Arbee. He led Banjo, Lee and Dino to an elevator. It took them up five decks to the shuttle bay (where the shuttle craft were kept and launched). There were a number of small spaceships lined up in a row that were different shapes and sizes.

“We’ll take this round one here,” pointed Arbee. They all climbed aboard a shuttle craft that looked like a big bubble. The bottom half was solid, the top was some sort of thick, clear glass or plastic. Inside there were no chairs, just a control panel. “Sorry about the absence of seating,” explained Arbee. “As you can see, we just don’t use chairs.”

“That’s okay,” said Banjo. “We’re too excited to sit.”

“Wow!” was all Lee said. “We’re gonna fly in a UFO.”

Dino was happy, too. “This is great,” he thought. He loved going for rides in the family car. But this was better because he could see out all the way around. He pressed his wet dog nose up against the glass.

“I think you will find this a bit more exciting than a ride in the car, Dino,” said Arbee.

“Woof!” replied Dino.

Arbee’s finger quickly pushed buttons on the shuttle’s control panel, causing the ship to rise towards the ceiling. As they floated higher, a door slid open automatically, leading to a short hallway. It closed behind them as soon as the craft was inside. Instantly, a door leading to the outside of the ship slid open. The bright sunlight hurt the boys’ eyes at first. Somehow the glass on the shuttle kept out the intense heat from the sun, keeping the temperature in the

ship nice and cool.

The shuttle floated silently away from the big, round, silver-colored starship. Arbee pushed a button on the shuttle's control board and the starship seemed to turn into a clump of large rocks and trees.

"Good camouflage," commented Lee.

"Yes," replied Arbee. "Dinosaurs are very sensitive to anything unusual in their territories, so I must disguise my ship so I do not upset them."

Arbee piloted the craft over the entrance of the time warp tunnel. It made Lee feel good to see it. "That leads to home," he thought.

They floated over the clearing where the Tyrannosaurs had been resting before they attacked the boys.

"I'm glad I'm not down there," mumbled Lee.

Dino looked around and whined as if he wanted to get out and chase something. "Let's get out!" he thought.

"No, Dino. I don't think getting out and chasing things is a good idea," said Arbee. "Lee, Banjo — I believe that those 'Tyrannosaurs' as you call them are out hunting for food. I've been studying their hunting methods. Do you mind watching? It's not a very pretty sight; quite messy, actually."

"If we're going to be scientists," said Lee, "I guess we've

got to take the good with the gross.”

“I wouldn’t miss it,” gasped Banjo.

“Very well,” replied Arbee. “Let me locate them.”

Arbee flew over the forest and down into the valley that the boys had seen earlier. They passed over a herd of browsing three-horned Triceratops and to the edge of a swamp. They were bigger than elephants.

“Look. The duck-billed dinosaurs we saw earlier,” whispered Banjo, as if the dinosaurs might hear him.

“You do not need to worry,” mentioned Arbee. “This shuttle craft looks like a cloud from the ground. The animals cannot see you or hear you.”

Below the shuttle craft was a large herd of duck-billed, plant-eating dinosaurs called Parasaurolophus. They had long, tube-shaped crests going off the back of their heads and dark green blotchy stripes on their gray-green bodies. They could stand on two legs or on all fours as they ate the thick vegetation; some of the duck bills were in the water and some were not. There were smaller ones, too, staying close by the adults.

“Those must be the babies,” thought Banjo.

“Ah-ha!” exclaimed Arbee, as he looked at a view screen on his control panel. “I’ve found our Tyrannosaurus friends—

over there to the right and they're getting ready to strike."

The boys stared into the clump of trees that Arbee had pointed to but they still couldn't see the meat-eaters.

"Where are they?" asked Banjo. "I don't see them."

"Look at this screen," said Arbee. "It can detect them from their body heat."

The boys looked and could see that the ship's sensors showed orange blotches on the screen where the Tyrannosaurs were hiding in the forest.

"There're three babies and one big one," noticed Banjo, pointing to the screen.

"Where's the other one?" asked Lee. "There's another big one somewhere."

"Look out of the ship to the left. Watch closely," said Arbee.

They all crowded to the front of the shuttle craft and looked down. Farther up along the edge of the swamp, the other big T-Rex was under the cover of some thick trees and was now cautiously working his way through the jungle toward a group of three plant-eaters. Even though it was so huge, it was hard to see.

"There's the other one, the dark one. The male, I think," commented Banjo.

“Correct,” said Arbee. “Watch him closely.” Arbee seemed as excited as the boys were.

The T-Rex crept as close as he could get to the unsuspecting duck bills without being spotted. Then without warning he exploded from his hiding place and charged full speed at a group of three browsing plant-eaters, roaring so loudly the boys could hear it through the thick class of the shuttle.

“Look at him go!” screamed Banjo. “He’s attacking!”

It was like a bomb had gone off. The herd of duck bills stampeded everywhere. Some of them ran for the water. Young and old alike were splashing, thrashing and paddling to get away from the attacking Tyrannosaurus, their eyes wide with fear. Others stampeded out onto the open field. They were running fast, like a herd of buffalo. The noise was unbelievable. They made loud, honking calls, which could be heard for miles, alerting every dinosaur in the area that they were under attack.

Even the huge herd of Triceratops stopped eating and galloped quickly to form themselves into large circular groups. The babies were in the middle surrounded by two rings of females and the big males pointing their deadly horns outward, stomping, grunting and growling. Not

even T-Rex would have dared attack a fortress of angry Triceratops.

Of the three duck bills that were being chased by the Tyrannosaurus, one of them ran towards the water and out of the way. The T-Rex ignored it. The other two ran right past the clump of trees where the mother and baby Tyrannosaurs were hiding.

As they ran past, the mother T-Rex picked the closest dinosaur as her target and made her move. She charged from the tree line, her mouth and giant teeth aimed like a missile at her prey, and before the plant-eater could even scream ... WHAM! The mother Tyrannosaurus bit the creature right on its neck. With a vicious twisting jerk of her head there came a loud SNAP! The doomed duck bill flopped to the ground like a rag doll. There were a few jerks and kicks from the dying dinosaur. Then, one final twitch of its tail. Its long tongue flopped out of its mouth. The duck-billed dinosaur was dead.

“Ohhh, man,” whispered Lee. “Did you see that?”

“*They trapped it!*” exclaimed Banjo. “They actually set a trap to catch it. Some of our scientists thought they were stupid, that they just ate dinosaurs that had died of old age and stuff.”



“Well, they may not have been able to do mathematics, my boy,” said Arbee, “but these animals were not stupid. As you can see, they were very clever hunters that could plan things out, much like your killer whales do in the present day oceans of Earth. They do eat dead dinosaurs, when they can get them. But a family of T-Rexes with young mouths to feed can’t afford to sit around and wait for something to die. So they must both hunt and scavenge.”

The big father Tyrannosaurus was standing over the kill now. He looked like he was guarding it, and for good reason. As soon as the duck bill had been brought down, a large number of smaller scavengers and meat-eaters gathered in the hopes of getting some of the fresh meat.

The father T-Rex lowered his head and ran in a circle around the dead dinosaur, roaring as he went while baring his huge teeth for all to see. The scavengers ran for cover or to a safe distance. They were hungry, but not that hungry. They would eat later, when the Tyrannosaurs had fed and gone back to their forest.

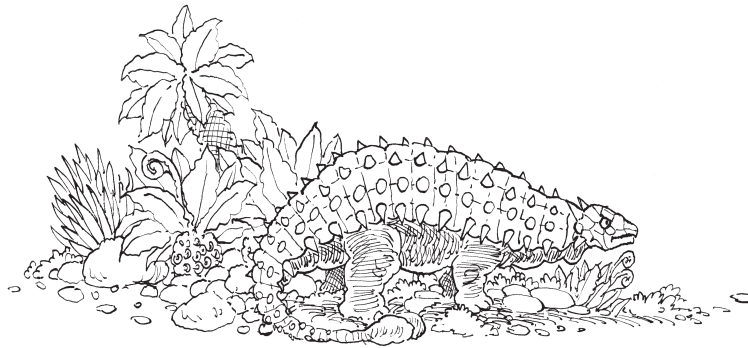
The mother Tyrannosaurus, in the meantime, let out a high-pitched call. The three babies ran from the cover of the trees and to her side. She then proceeded to use her

knife-like teeth and powerful jaws to tear through the tough, thick skin and into the flesh of the dead beast.

“Let’s move in for a closer look,” said Arbee.

Chapter Eleven

Tyrannosaurus Take-Out



“Are you sure that’s a good idea?” asked Lee, who felt like a fish in a flying fish bowl.

“I assure you,” said Arbee, “they cannot see us. We are quite safe.”

Arbee flew the ship closer to the Tyrannosaurs and they all watched in amazement as the female continued to tear into the dead duck bill’s flesh. Her babies were trying to help, using their smaller jaws to pull away pieces of the

thick gray-green skin.

“She’s teaching them,” said Arbee. “That is why the parents bring them along. To teach them to hunt and how to use their teeth to tear their kill apart, even what parts to eat.”

“Wow,” sighed Banjo.

“Dude, gross!” exclaimed Lee. “Blood and guts everywhere. Yuk.”

The mother Tyrannosaurus had torn away the skin on one of the legs and was ripping the meat to shreds. The body of the dead dinosaur jerked about as she bit into it, even though it was twenty-five feet long.

“She’s strong,” thought Banjo.

“I hate those things,” thought Dino. “No wonder there’s no dogs around here!”

“Don’t worry, Dino. You’re quite safe here,” said Arbee. “And the reason you don’t see any dogs is that they have not been invented yet, at least not on this planet.”

The mother T-Rex stood back with the father and let her children eat. They were gobbling meat as fast as they could. Their heads and front sides were covered with blood. When they had eaten all the meat the mother had ripped apart, the mother T-Rex sliced up more for them

until they had eaten their fill.

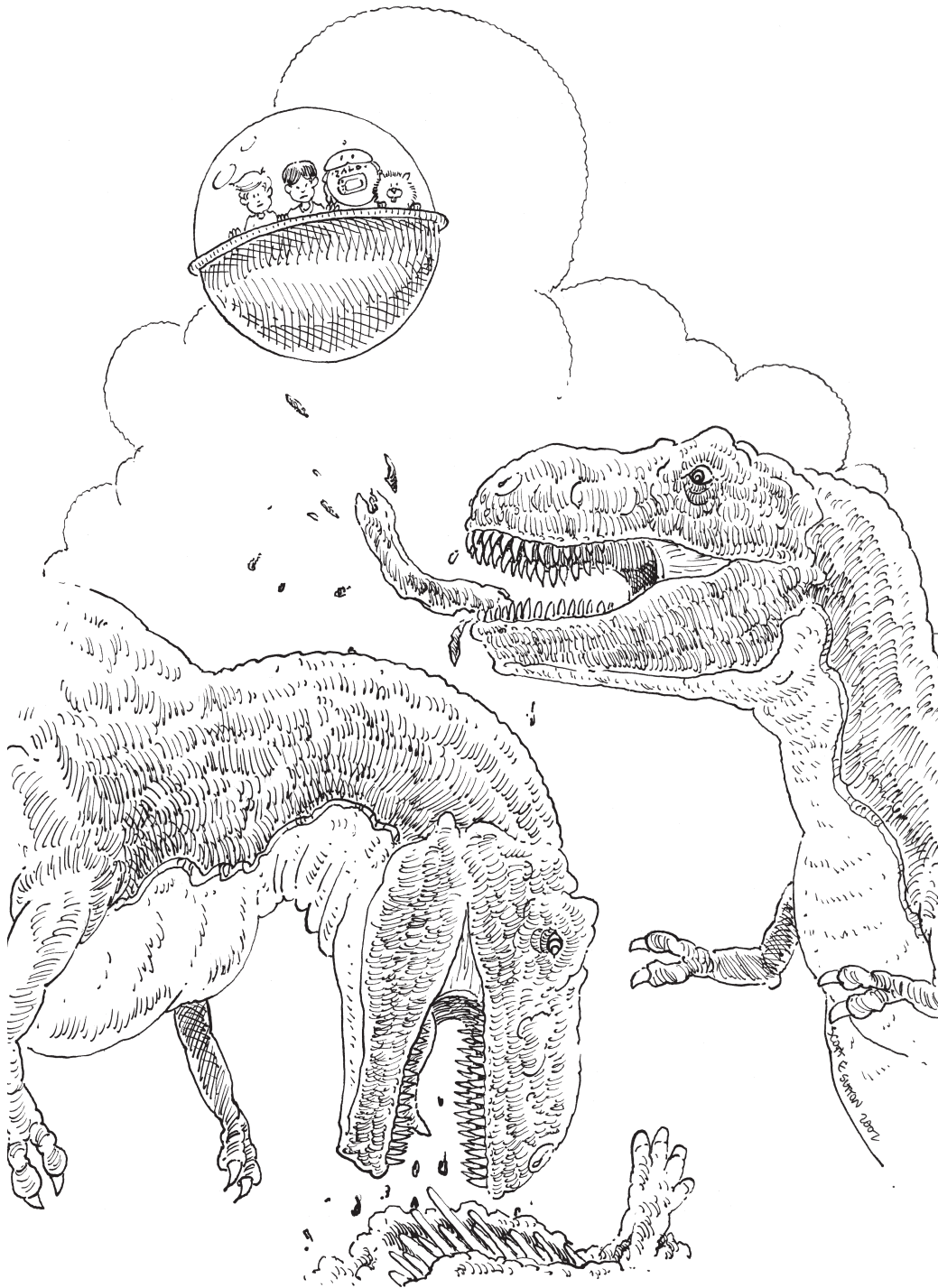
Then the two parents went to work, tearing off much larger hunks of blood-red flesh from the legs, sides and shoulders, tipping up their heads and swallowing them whole. Nothing could stop their powerful jaws; even bones snapped like twigs when those massive jaws closed on them.

“Look how they act like a family the way they do things,” said Banjo, who was scratching his head in confusion. “How can they do that? Their brains are so small, aren’t they?”

“Brains?” said Arbee with surprise. “Some day you and your people will learn that the brain is not the center of intelligence or memory. It is just a relay point between the life form and its body.”

“Huh?” said Lee, surprised. “But we were taught that the brain ...”

“Yes, yes, I know,” interrupted Arbee. “And your scientists once taught that your planet was flat, not round, too. But it’s not true! Life forms operate very differently than your scientists think. They think they are just pieces of meat or just chemicals. This is not true. It is one of the things a civilization must learn in order to advance.”



“Hmmm,” said Lee. “Well, I’m not sure what you mean. Maybe we’ll figure it out someday.”

“He means,” said Banjo, “that just because they’ve got small brains doesn’t mean they’re stupid; that there’s more to life than brains. Now, if I could just convince my parents and teachers of that ...”

“Precisely, Banjo,” replied Arbee. “There is more to ‘life’ than a brain.”

The Tyrannosaurs had finished feeding and had devoured most of the meat from the body. They rested a bit, then fed some more.

“Hey, they even eat the intestines,” commented Banjo.

“Wouldn’t it make them sick, eating that stuff? Gross!” said Lee, with a frown on his face.

“Yes, they do eat the intestines. The vegetable matter in the intestines is very nutritious,” said Arbee. “They know what parts they need to eat and what not to. For example, the organs such as the heart, liver, and kidneys are very nourishing as well.”

“Ewww!” replied Lee. “Liver! Yuk. My mom tried to feed me that once. I almost barfed.”

“Hey, Arbee,” said Banjo, “are dinosaurs warm-blooded like mammals or cold-blooded like reptiles?”

Arbee thought for a moment, scanning his data banks. “Well,” he said finally, “most dinosaurs are like mammals on the inside. By that I mean they are warm-blooded.”

“Ah-ha!” exclaimed Banjo, with a surprised look on his face. “Paleontologists have been arguing about that one for years.”

“But dinosaurs are different,” said Arbee. “These two-legged meat-eaters, large and small, are very much like birds, but not exactly. See the clumps of white fuzz on the baby T-Rexes?”

“Yeah,” said Banjo. “I was wondering about that.”

“When the babies are born they are covered with that feathery material, just like baby birds. They lose the covering as they grow older. There are a few dinosaurs in this time period, and going back millions of years, whose bodies are completely covered with this feather-like material,” said Arbee.

“Wow,” sighed Banjo. “Some paleontologists thought that, too.”

“But the big plant-eaters, like Triceratops and others, seem to be more like the elephants or buffalo that live on your planet now, you see. Dinosaurs are not just one sort of animal. They have come up with many ways in which to

survive. That is what life does. It figures things out, finds the best way to get along. It may take a long time and there may be failures, but life finds a way.”

“This is so great,” sighed Banjo.

“Hey, you guys,” said Lee. “The Tyrannosaurs are going somewhere, look!”

They all looked out of the ship towards the T-Rex family. They were moving in a group away from what was left of the dead dinosaur and towards the water. The herds of duck-billed dinosaurs and Triceratops had moved well out of the way of the meat eaters and had cautiously continued their eating. Members of each herd had guard dinosaurs whose job it was to keep a close eye on every move the Tyrannosaurs made. Even though the T-Rexes had eaten, they were taking no chances. It was never a good idea to turn your back to a T-Rex at any time.

“I suspect they are going to wash up and drink some water,” said Arbee.

Sure enough, the five beasts walked into the blue-green water and began dunking themselves, rinsing off the blood as best they could from their bodies. They put their enormous heads into the water and began opening and closing their mouths, flushing out leftover bits of skin, flesh and bone.

“Ha, haaa! Those crazy critters are brushing their teeth!” laughed Lee.

“Arbee, do all Tyrannosaurs act like this? I mean, work as a family, take baths ... stuff like that?” asked Banjo, his nose pressed against the glass of the shuttle craft.

“All the ones I’ve seen do,” answered Arbee. “There is not a large population of these creatures around, that is why they’re so caring and protective of their young. I found Tyrannosaurus families have territories approximately fifty to a hundred miles long and fifty to a hundred miles wide.”

“That’s probably why our scientists haven’t found that many skeletons of T-Rexes,” said Banjo.

“That’ means T-Rexes live in an area that’s twenty-five hundred to ten thousand square miles,” said Lee, his eyes still glued on the bathing T-Rexes.

“Lee’s good in math,” commented Banjo, pointing to Lee with his thumb.

“Yes, I see,” said Arbee. “Very quick, too.”

“Look, they’re heading back to the forest,” said Lee.

“Let’s see where they are going, shall we?” said Arbee, as he flew the shuttle craft above and behind the Tyrannosaurs. He followed them back to their forest. As

soon as they were past what was left of the dead and eaten dinosaur, large numbers of scavengers charged in to feed on the gruesome remains.

Dino was watching the dinosaurs, too, quietly. Every once in a while he would growl at them. "Pesky oversized lizards," he thought. "I'm glad they don't live in my neighborhood."

Arbee laughed. "Yes, Dino, having those things in your neighborhood would be dangerous, to say the least."

"Do they sleep?" asked Banjo. "The T-Rexes, I mean."

"Yes, they do," answered Arbee. "They sleep in the forest most of the night."

"When will they eat again?" asked Banjo.

"Whenever they want and wherever they want," said Lee to himself.

"Usually every other day. Sometimes every few days," said Arbee. "Those babies need a lot of food. They sometimes hunt small animals on their own. That's probably why they chased you three. They chase most anything that moves."

"Tell me about it," said Lee. "They almost ate us, too."

"What happens when the babies grow up?" asked Banjo.

"When they're almost full grown all of the babies leave

to find a mate and live in their own territory somewhere else. The last time the Tyrannosaurs have babies, the babies grow up and leave just like the others, except for one female. The one female who stays attracts a mate when she's older and they will eventually inherit or take over the territory from the older ones when they die of old age or by accident. The pairs of Tyrannosaurs stay together for life," said Arbee. "They are quite remarkable creatures, really. They rarely go into another's territory and hardly ever fight with each other, for obvious reasons. A real fight between T-Rexes would be very messy. They even communicate using high-pitched squeals, chirping sounds and grunts. Also, they can live to be well over one hundred years old."

"Wow!" said Banjo, shaking his head. "Who would have known they were like this? It makes you almost like them."

"*Like them!*" exclaimed Lee. "Are you nuts? Oh, they'd like us, too ... FOR DINNER! You'd be a Banjo burger."

"Take it easy, Lee," sighed Banjo. "It's not like we're taking one home with us. Hey, Arbee, that reminds me. Why can't we bring stuff back through the time warp tunnel? Every time we try, it disappears. Even when we take

photographs.”

“Because if you take something out of the time it is supposed to be in it disappears,” answered Arbee. “It’s difficult when you’re trying to do research. You have to remember everything. I can’t even bring back any samples. It is such a bother. I must say also, that if we stay here in this time for too long we would disappear, too, but it would take at least a year.”

“Oh, I get it,” said Lee. “Hey, Arbee, I read this science fiction story once about these guys who travel back in time and one of the guys steps on a butterfly or bug or something and when they come back to the present, their whole world was changed because he squashed that one bug. So aren’t we messing up the future?”

Arbee laughed, “Oh, you Earth people. Great imaginations! Some day you’ll be the best entertainers in the whole galaxy, I’m sure of it. The answer, my friend Lee, is no! The first and strongest ingredient in this universe we live in is *time*. Time is like a giant river flowing along. You just don’t change the river by throwing a rock into it. It doesn’t matter what you do back in time. The current of time is so strong it will just absorb it. You could squash a million bugs and nothing will happen to the future. You see, what we

are watching here has already happened. We cannot change that.”

“I get it,” said Banjo. “It’s like trying to slow a whole river down by sticking your hand in it or something. You just can’t do it.”

“Right,” Arbee answered.

By now the Tyrannosaurs were into the forest. Arbee was busy flying the shuttle craft through and around the big trees. Once through the forest, the dinosaur family made their way back to the clearing where the time warp tunnel was, but there was something wrong.

There in the clearing, amongst the bushes, was an intruder. It was a heavy-looking dinosaur, like a four-legged, armor-plated tank with a club on the end of its tail. It was over twenty feet in length and weighed over three tons. It was a massive beast, but it was in T-Rex territory. This was unacceptable to the T-Rexes.

“Look!” yelled Banjo. “Ankylosaurus.”

The father T-Rex stepped forward, lowered his head and growled. The Ankylosaurus turned to face him and growled back. The father Tyrannosaurus hated these creatures. One of them had killed one of his babies. Maybe it was this one, maybe not. It didn’t matter to him, it had to

go because it was a threat to his family.

“Oh, no! They’re going to fight,” gasped Arbee. Then without a warning he flew the shuttle craft right between the angry Tyrannosaurus and the Ankylosaurus.

Chapter Twelve

Who's Looking at Whom?



“ARBEE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?” screamed Lee, grabbing hold of the side of the ship.

“Don’t worry,” explained Arbee in a calm voice. “I am going to break up this fight before it starts. They are too close to the time warp tunnel and my ship. When dinosaurs fight they do so over large areas. They really tear up the landscape. I cannot afford to have one of them crash into my ship.”

“How are you going to do it?” asked Banjo.

“I’m going to make this ship look like a ball of fire. Just an illusion, but fire is one of the dinosaurs’ greatest fears. That should drive the Ankylosaurus beast away from here.”

“I sure hope you know what you’re doing!” exclaimed Lee, as he looked at the huge, snarling T-Rex on one side and the big, angry Ankylosaurus on the other.

“Here we go,” said Arbee, as he rapidly pushed buttons on his control board. In an instant the illusion was on. From inside the ship it didn’t look like much, just a yellow and orange sea of flashing light all around them. But from the outside it looked like a big ball of flames. The reaction was instantaneous. The T-Rex father leaped back along with the rest of his family. The tank-like Ankylosaurus was so scared it turned and ran. But as it did, something unexpected happened.

“Hey! Look out for its tail!” screamed Lee.

But before the words were even out of his mouth, before even Arbee could react ... CRASH! The heavy club tail of the fleeing Ankylosaurus slammed into the side of the ship. The sound inside the bubble-shaped shuttle was deafening. The craft was hurled to the ground and bounced into the same clump of bushes where, earlier, Lee

and Banjo had hid from the baby Tyrannosaurs. Just forty feet from the entrance to the time warp tunnel.

The boys screamed as they hit. Dino yelped. Arbee went silent the second he hit the ship's side. There was white smoke and lots of sparks flying inside the craft, now lying on its side. The glass part was facing the clearing. It was badly cracked.

"Cough, cough, cough ... Banjo! ... cough ... you okay?" yelled Lee.

"Cough ... yeah! ... cough," Banjo replied. "Dino, come! Here, boy ... come here!"

There was a whine and Dino came to Banjo. "You okay, boy? Huh?" asked Banjo. Dino licked his face. Banjo hugged his dog with relief. He wasn't hurt. "Whoa. What happened?" Dino thought.

"Lee!" yelled Banjo, "Are you okay?"

"Owww ... my arm! I banged my arm on something," he replied. "It hurts bad."

Banjo scurried to Lee's side. "Let me see," he said. "Where'd you hit it?"

"My elbow," Lee replied. Lee slowly moved it, the pain didn't seem that bad now.

"Looks like you just bumped your funny bone," said

Banjo. "I don't think it's broken."

"I don't think so either," said Lee. "It feels okay, it just hurts some."

Just to be on the safe side, Banjo took a cloth bandage out of his backpack and wrapped it around Lee's elbow. "I'm glad I listened to my dad," said Banjo. "You can never be too prepared."

With Lee taken care of, the boys turned their attention to Arbee, who was just lying on the side of the ship. His red eyes were closed and the lights on his chest blinked on and off.

"Arbee," yelled Lee. "Arbee, wake up! We've crashed." Lee and Banjo shook Arbee, but he just lay there, no movement and no sound, just the blinking.

"Aww, come on, Arbee, wake up, please!" whined Banjo.

Even Dino tried to help by licking Arbee's face. "You okay, Arbee?" thought Dino.

"It's no use," said Banjo. "He's overloaded or shorted out or broken or something."

"Great. Just great," sighed Lee. "We're stuck here in the same place we were before. What a day. This is a nightmare. Wait! Maybe we can call Zinzu in the starship for help," he suggested.

“Good idea, but how?” asked Banjo. “I don’t know how any of this stuff works.”

Lee climbed up and grabbed a hold of the control board in the middle of the ship. He had a painful look on his face. His arm still hurt. He studied the panel, trying to make some sense of the alien symbols in front of him.

“Awww. It’s no use,” sighed Lee at last. “I can’t figure out which button does what.”

“Just start pushing buttons,” said Banjo.

“No way!” replied Lee. “What if I push the wrong one? We could shoot into space and be lost forever.”

To make matters worse, the Tyrannosaurs were now moving in to investigate the giant bubble with the strange creatures moving around inside. The ship’s camouflage was now turned off as a result of the crash.

“Oh, no,” whined Lee. “Not this again!”

Lee slid down beside Banjo. Dino was growling. All five T-Rexes were staring into the bubble, turning their heads this way and that, trying to get a better look. The babies were gently bumping their heads against the shuttle’s cracked glass.

“Now I know what those lobsters in the fish tanks at the supermarket feel like,” said Lee, “just waiting to be eaten.”

The father T-Rex had begun to claw at the glass with his giant foot.

“I hope that glass holds,” whispered Banjo. “Let’s stay as quiet and as still as we can. If we can hold out long enough, maybe Zinzu will come looking for us. Maybe this ship has an automatic distress signal or something.”

“Or something,” sighed Lee, rubbing his bandaged arm.

Dino was hiding in Banjo’s arms. “Boy, talk about a bad day,” he thought. “I say we get out of here. NOW!” he thought.

Lee had quietly slid over to Arbee. “Maybe I can get Arbee going again,” he whispered.

“Worth a try,” replied Banjo, who was keeping an eye on the T-Rex family. The father was getting more aggressive with his clawing. He was shaking the whole shuttle craft and roaring loudly.

Lee looked at the keyboard on Arbee’s chest. There were at least five blinking buttons. Lee pushed one. Nothing happened. He pushed another, still no change. In desperation he pushed them all... nothing.

“Darn it, Arbee!” yelled Lee as his fist hit Arbee’s chest.

“Well, now! There’s no reason to hit me. I’m coming, I’m



coming,” scolded Arbee, as he suddenly came back to life.

“Arbee, you’re alive!” yelled Lee, throwing his arms around the oval alien.

“Oh, man!” sighed Banjo. “Arbee, am I glad to see you.”

“And I’m glad to see you,” Arbee replied, as he floated up. “Sorry to scare you, but I was just doing some internal repairs. I had to shut down. Are you all right?”

“Well, we’ve crashed. Lee hurt his elbow,” answered Banjo. “And the Tyrannosaurs are trying to get in to eat us. But other than that everything is just peachy.”

“I see,” said Arbee. “Lee, let me see both your arms.”

Lee showed Arbee his arms. Arbee first put his hands around Lee’s uninjured elbow. Lee felt some heat. Then Arbee put his hands around Lee’s injured elbow. Again, Lee felt heat. The pain disappeared immediately.

“Hey!” exclaimed Lee. “You fixed it. No more pain.” Lee removed the bandage and bent his arm back and forth. His elbow was as good as new.

“Okay, that’s great, Arbee,” said Banjo, pointing to the snarling father Tyrannosaurus outside, who was trying now to bite his way through the glass. “But do you have a cure for Tyrannosaurs?”

“Boys,” Arbee said, “it’s time that I got you back home.”

“Yes, great idea! Good idea! I like that idea!” exclaimed Lee, waving his hands in the air.

Arbee tried to get the shuttle craft going again. He pushed some buttons on the control board, but nothing happened. He tried again and again with no results. “Drat. The circuits are fried. It looks like I’m going to have to open the emergency escape hatch and go out there,” said Arbee. “What I will do is create a distraction. When the dinosaurs are looking at me and are at a safe distance away, you can make a run for the time warp tunnel as fast as you can. Understand?”

“Are you insane?” yelled Lee. “They’ll tear you to pieces. You can’t go out there.”

“Don’t worry about me. I have an electric body, remember? I can move faster by far than they can,” said Arbee. “Now get ready.”

“Arbee, wait,” said Banjo. “Ummm ... Can we come see you again? ... I mean, can we come back to help you again?”

Arbee paused and thought. “Alright,” he said finally. “I change my research locations and times about every two weeks. Next time I will pick a safer spot so you can come through without danger. You may join me if you wish.”

“We gotta get out of here alive first, Banjo,” scolded Lee. “Don’t forget that part.”

“Great!” said Banjo. “Thanks, Arbee.”

Arbee floated over to the boys and from his hand appeared a small coin-shaped piece of metal. He handed it to Banjo. “Always carry this when you come through. It will let me know that you are here and where you are. It is a locator.”

“Yeah, okay,” replied Banjo. “Thanks, Arbee ... for everything.” He stuffed the coin-shaped object securely into his pocket.

“Yeah, thanks, Arbee,” added Lee. “And thanks for not killing us, too.”

“You are very welcome,” Arbee said, a little confused. “You are going to make excellent scientists someday,” he told them. The boys shook Arbee’s hand. “Now get ready. We’re not out of this mess yet. Good-bye, Dino. See you next time.”

“Woof!” barked Dino. “See you, Arbee!”

Arbee floated to one side of the broken-down shuttle craft, pushed a button on the wall and a door to the outside opened. Arbee flew out instantly into the hot, sticky air.

“Bye, Arbee,” Banjo whispered, with a tear in his eye.

“Hey, he’ll be okay,” said Lee, patting Banjo on the shoulder. “Let’s get ready. We gotta go.”

Arbee floated in front of the Tyrannosaurs flapping his arms and making noises. The dinosaurs wasted no time and went right after him. He made them follow him farther into the clearing, away from the shuttle craft and the time warp tunnel.

“It’s only about forty or fifty feet to the entrance,” whispered Lee. “Let’s move. Red Alert.”

“Okay,” replied Banjo, gritting his teeth and wiping his nose. “Red Alert.”

Banjo grabbed Dino’s leash and they all quietly made their way through the emergency exit and into position. They crouched behind the ship and watched Arbee flapping and squawking. He was driving the T-Rexes crazy. Better yet, he was luring them farther and farther away from Dino and the boys.

“Arbee’s got them far enough away,” whispered Banjo. “We go on three. One ... two ... three. *Go!*”

The boys and Dino ran to the time warp tunnel as fast as they could, jumping over rocks and dodging bushes. But half way to the tunnel entrance, one of the baby Tyrannosaurs spotted them and in an instant charged in

their direction.

“Run faster! Run faster, Lee! Move, move, move!” screamed Banjo, seeing the charging baby.

Lee looked back, tripped, and fell to the ground, kicking up a cloud of dust. “Ow!” he yelled.

“Come on. Get up!” yelled Banjo as he helped his friend to his feet.

Dino barked ferociously at the attacking dinosaurs.

They continued running, with the baby T-Rex close behind, growling and snapping its jaws. They made it to the entrance before the baby T-Rex. Lee dove into the tunnel, followed by Dino. Banjo looked back for an instant and saw Arbee still flapping around, distracting all the Tyrannosaurs except for the one baby who was coming right for him, its deadly jaws wide open. It was almost to the tunnel entrance. Banjo dove into the tunnel and crawled as fast as he possibly could. “I hope that Tyrannosaurus can’t make it through the time warp tunnel,” he thought. “What would I tell Mom? She’d be really mad if that thing got into the house.”

Banjo crawled until he leapt through the doggie door and into the safety of his garage and rolled exhausted onto the floor. What he never saw was that when the baby T-Rex

tried to follow them into the tunnel he got bounced back on his tail like he had run into a rubber wall. After shaking his head, the baby got up. He made a few more failed attempts to enter the time tunnel, but gave up and rejoined his family, who were still chasing after Arbee.

When Arbee saw that the boys were safely through the time warp tunnel he pushed a button on his chest and disappeared. He left the family of very angry and confused T-Rexes standing there. He flew back to the starship and with Zinzu's help he started salvage operations on his damaged shuttle craft.

"You okay?" asked Lee, out of breath.

Banjo sat for a moment, catching his breath. "Yeah ... you?"

"Great!" puffed Lee. "We're home and not in some T-Rex's stomach."

Banjo opened the door to the backyard, getting rid of the time warp tunnel so Dino couldn't run back through it. He unhooked Dino from his leash and the boys stumbled into the kitchen where Banjo's mom was making dinner. Although the boys had spent almost a day back in the past, the clock on the kitchen, wall read 4:01. Only one minute had gone by in the present.

“You two back already?” asked Mrs. Montgomery, frowning a little as she looked at the boys. “You two look as if you’ve seen a monster or something. Are you okay?”

“We saw monsters, alright. Too many monsters!” thought Dino, as he drank most of the water in his water dish.

The boys looked at each other and broke into laughter.

“You going to let your mother in on the joke?” asked Mrs. Montgomery in a sweet “mom” voice.

“It’s nothing, Mom. It’s just ... never mind,” laughed Banjo. “Me and Lee are going up to my room to read some dinosaur books.”

“Okay,” she said, smiling. “Dinner’s at six. Oh, and Lee, your mom called and I asked her if you could stay for dinner. She said that would be fine, okay?”

“Okay, sure. Thanks, Mrs. Montgomery,” replied Lee. “I could go for some meatloaf.”

Lee, Banjo and Dino sat in Banjo’s room, eating Banjo’s secret stash of cookies and looking at dinosaur books.

“So,” said Banjo. “When do you wanna go through the you-know-what back to you-know-when?”

“You’re crazy, dude,” mumbled Lee, with a mouth full of cookies.

“Well?” asked Banjo.

“Two weeks,” said Lee. “Just like Arbee ... uh, I mean,
you-know-who said.”

“Cool,” replied Banjo.

