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the
UNBELIEVABLY
SCARY
THING THAT
HAPPENED IN
HUGGABIE
FALLS

illustrated by
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Why Inside a Portaloo Is Not a Great Place to Hide

Kipp, Tobias, Cymphany and Felonious Dark raced after Gertrude into the town square to be confronted by a Tyrannosaurus Rex, a skyscraper of a dinosaur with very small arms but very big teeth, which meant it was destined to be very bad at basketball but potentially very good at biting things in half. Biting something in half was actually what it was doing as Kipp, Tobias, Cymphany and Felonious Dark ran into the square.

‘Is that our school bus?’ Cymphany asked as she skidded to a stop.

‘That’s half of it.’ Kipp pointed. ‘The other half is flying off over there.’

Tobias gulped. ‘I hope there were no children on board.’

Felonious Dark shook his head. ‘The school bus is being rented by the DFA today, the Dinosaur Fearers Anonymous group, for one of their field trips.’

In any normal situation, I’m sure Kipp, Cymphany and Tobias would have stared in wonder at Felonious Dark, as if to say how could you possibly know that? I am certainly wondering myself. But they were too busy watching the dinosaur swish its giant tail into the Huggabie Falls Demolition Services building, demolishing it, which was hilariously ironic, but any humour in the situation was completely lost on the Huggabie Falls DFA members, who were too busy screaming, flailing their arms and running for their lives. Many of them

were wearing white shirts with the DFA logo on them: a dinosaur inside a red circle with a red line across it. Funnily enough, the dinosaur pictured in the logo was a brontosaurus, a non-meat-eating and non-threatening kind of dinosaur. Surely a dangerous Tyrannosaurus Rex, a T-Rex, like the one rampaging through town at that very moment, would have been a more appropriate dinosaur to have on their logo. Considering many members of the DFA were currently being picked up, flung into the air and swallowed whole by a T-Rex, that change would more than likely be proposed at their next general meeting, if there were any members of the DFA left to attend that meeting.

As Kipp, Tobias, Cymphany, Felonious Dark and Gertrude watched the T-Rex carnage, with the same look of horror on their faces as someone might have if they've just found out the world had run out of marmalade, something unexpected happened. The T-Rex stopped, mid-smashing-tail-swing, and sniffed the air.

Then it turned its head and locked its eyes on Kipp, Tobias, Cymphany, Felonious Dark and Gertrude. It sniffed the air again. Its eyes bulged, its jaw dropped, and a glob of saliva dribbled from its open mouth.

It's commonly thought that T-Rex's have bad eyesight and can only see something if it moves. I'm no dinosaur expert, but that is an easy opinion to have when a T-Rex is not staring at you in the same way a starving man, trapped on a desert island, who has not eaten in weeks, might stare at a passing ship with a fried-chicken logo on the side.

Kipp, Tobias, Cymphany and Gertrude looked terrified. The only person who didn't look terrified was Felonious Dark, because he was too busy looking guilty.

'Now might be a good time,' Felonious Dark gulped, 'to mention that I have a piece of beef jerky in my pocket.'

Tobias looked at him. 'I was wondering what that smell was.'

‘Okay,’ Kipp said calmly. ‘No one panic. We’ll be okay just as long as we don’t make any sudden move—’

‘Run!’ Gertrude screamed, and she turned and sprinted down Digmont Drive.

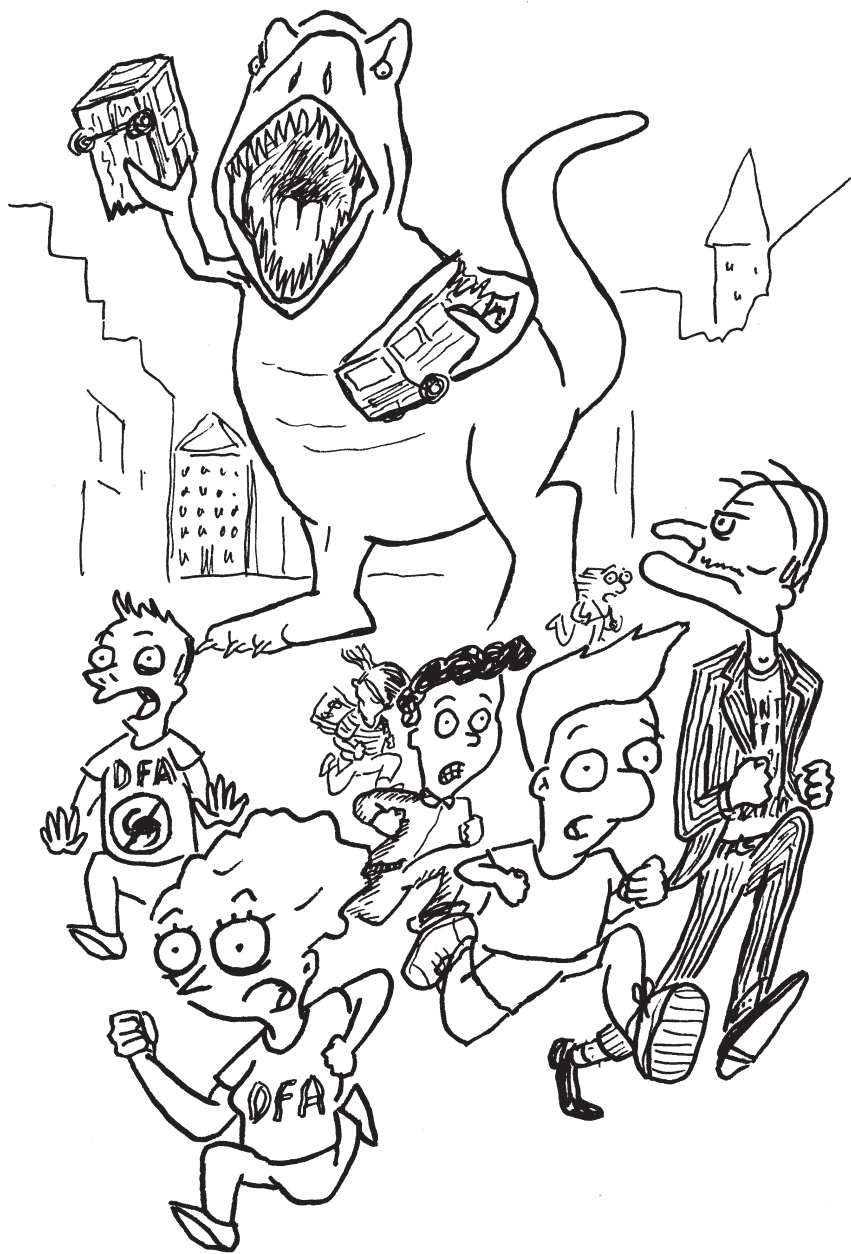
So that pretty much destroyed Kipp’s not-panicking plans. They ran down Digmont Drive and turned into Digmont Drive. Under them, the ground shuddered, and behind them huge thudding dinosaur feet pounded the earth.

Kipp caught up to Felonious Dark. ‘Why don’t you throw the beef jerky behind us, and maybe the T-Rex will stop and eat it?’

Felonious Dark shook his head as he ran, his arms pumping like pistons. ‘I have a sneaky suspicion that won’t work,’ he said between panting breaths.

‘Why is that?’ Cymphany screamed over the deafening dinosaur roar, which sounded like it was getting closer behind them.

‘Because,’ Felonious Dark said, ‘I did that about a hundred metres ago and the T-Rex is



still chasing us.'

Cymphany shook her head. 'This is ridiculous. What are we running away from? Dinosaurs don't exist—they've been extinct for sixty-five million years. There is no way that this is actually happening.'

Tobias shrugged, which is hard to do when you're running full pelt. 'Maybe this one didn't die out. Maybe it was sleeping.'

Cymphany glared at Tobias, which is also hard to do while you are running full pelt. 'Asleep for sixty-five million years?'

'Sure,' Tobias said. 'Once when I was really tired, I slept in till three-thirty in the afternoon.'

'Tobias, I'm not having this conversation anymore,' Cymphany said.

And at that exact moment, Kipp said, 'Down here,' and he ducked into an alley.

Cymphany, Tobias, Felonious Dark and Gertrude ducked right in behind him, just as the T-Rex thundered past.

Then the thundering stopped, and was

replaced by a lot of crashing, and tail-bashing, which all sounded suspiciously like a Tyrannosaurus Rex doing a U-turn.

‘It will be back in a second,’ Felonious Dark said. ‘Thirteen actually. Tyrannosaurus Rexes take exactly thirteen seconds to do a U-turn.’

Again, if Kipp, Tobias and Cymphany had had more time they would have asked Felonious Dark how he could possibly know that obscure fact. But they didn’t have time, so Tobias just said the most completely obvious thing ever recorded as being said in human history: ‘We need to find a hiding spot.’

But the alley was a dead end, and all that was at the end of the alley was a sign for Huggabie Falls Pet Insurance, with a slogan under it that read:

No Pet Too Small, No Pet Too Big.

Again, the hilarious irony of this sign was lost on everyone in the alley. What wasn’t lost on Kipp, Tobias, Cymphany, Felonious Dark and

Gertrude was a line of five blue portable toilets, portaloos. Kipp looked down the line of people. There were five of them. He looked back at the five portaloos. ‘Are you guys thinking what I’m thinking?’ he said.

A few seconds later, Cymphany sat crouched on a toilet inside one of the five blue plastic portaloos. It was quiet. Some would say too quiet, but then again what is too quiet? Quiet is just quiet.

‘Cymphany?’ she heard Kipp’s voice, and she looked confused, seemingly because his voice didn’t sound all echoey like she would have expected it to sound if Kipp was in one of the other four portaloos.

‘Yes, Kipp?’ Cymphany replied, and she jumped with surprise at how echoey her voice was inside the portaloos.

‘Why aren’t you hiding under the sign like the rest of us?’ Kipp asked.

Cymphany frowned. ‘*That* was what you were thinking!’

‘Of course,’ Kipp said. ‘To trick the dinosaur into thinking we were hiding in the portaloos, then hoping it would eat the portaloos, and maybe it wouldn’t like the taste of blue plastic, and it would run away.’

‘Right,’ said Cymphany slowly.

‘I thought,’ Kipp said, even more slowly, ‘you knew what I was thinking.’

Cymphany frowned again. It was what she did best. ‘As if anyone could know you were thinking that!’

‘I knew,’ Tobias said. And Cymphany’s face screwed up, as she made a mental note to have a stern talk with Tobias later.

‘I knew too,’ Felonious Dark said.

And then, a few seconds later, a third voice, Gertrude’s, said, ‘Actually, I didn’t know—I just followed Mr Dark.’

Cymphany rolled her eyes. ‘It doesn’t matter: I can’t hear it, so it must have gone. And, besides, like I said earlier’—she spoke like someone who puts a lot of faith in what they’ve read in

textbooks—‘dinosaurs are extinct. There is no way there’s a Tyrannosaurus Rex out there. It’s not possible.’

At that exact moment there was a thundering roar and two giant teeth speared through the plastic of the portaloo. Cymphany reeled, presumably alarmed at the rather unpleasant, stomach-flipping sensation of the portaloo being lifted into the air and the door, which she had forgotten to lock, swinging open.

Kipp, who had crawled out from under the sign, found himself staring up at Cymphany, who was clutching onto and dangling from a toilet-roll holder. She looked down at Kipp in shock. ‘Either you just got a lot smaller,’ she said, ‘or I just got a lot higher.’

The Tyrannosaurus Rex, who had the portaloo with Cymphany inside it in its jaws, threw back its head, flipping Cymphany back inside the blue plastic portaloo.

The dinosaur spread its stance, swung its head again and roared as it clamped its jaws

down on the portaloo, which began to splinter and buckle.

‘Cymphany!’ Tobias screamed. ‘Jump. I’ll catch you.’

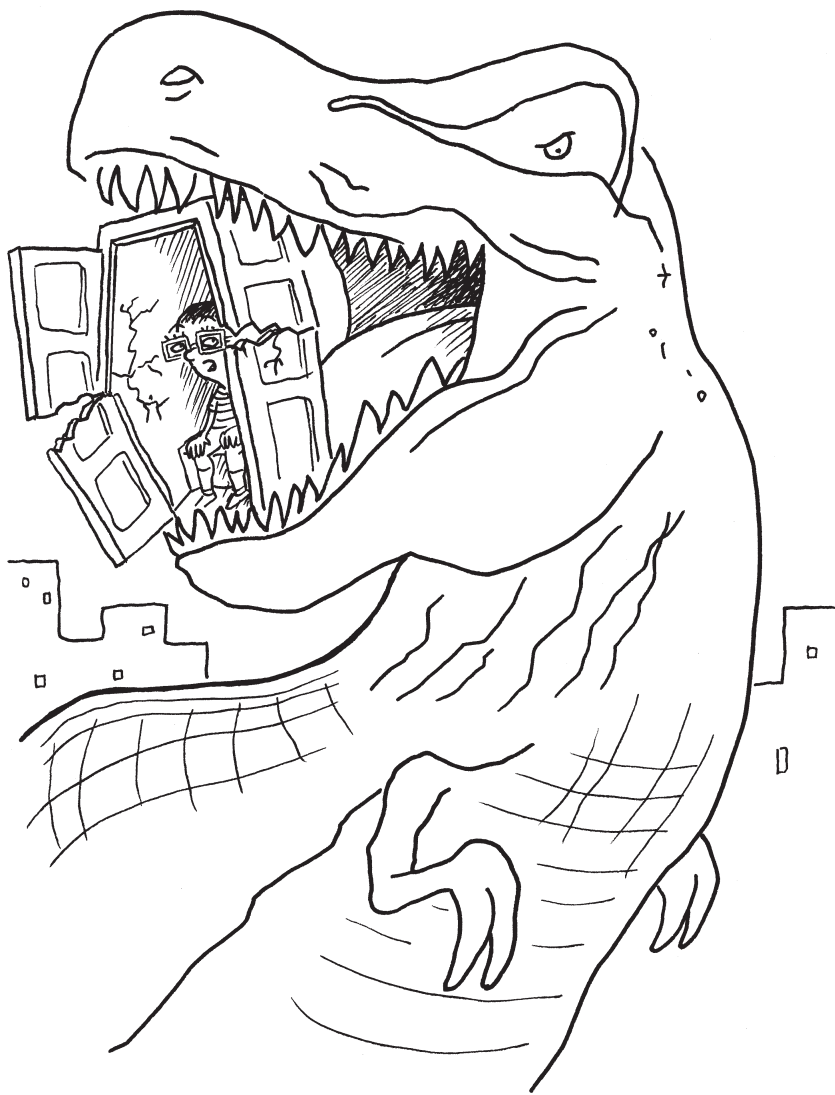
Cymphany smiled, as though she didn’t want to hurt her friend’s feelings. ‘No, thank you,’ she said, as if to say, the only thing Tobias was really good at catching was colds.

As the dinosaur’s jaw clenching continued, a plastic shard snapped off the side of the portaloo and the roof started to crumple.

‘We’ll all catch you,’ Kipp said, looking back to Felonious Dark and Gertrude, only to find they were about fifty metres away, running back down the alley.

‘Sorry,’ Felonious Dark called back. ‘I’m mostly reformed, but I’m still working on building up positive character traits like bravery and helping others. You could say I’m a bit of a work in prog—’

At that point Felonious Dark and Gertrude disappeared around the corner, and you couldn’t



catch the end of the sentence, but I'm going to take a wild guess that it was 'ress'.

'Okay, then,' Kipp said, as he turned back to look up at Cymphany. 'Tobias and I will catch you.'

Tobias nodded, in a less-than-confident-but-willing-to-give-it-a-try-to-save-my-friend manner.

Cymphany shook her head. 'It's okay. I'm fine. As I've told you already, dinosaurs don't exist.' She didn't seem to notice a faint voice, coming from the deep recesses of the dinosaur's open mouth. 'Help, we're members of the Dinosaur Fearer's Anonymous group, and we've been swallowed whole and are currently inside a dinosaur's belly, which, due to our particular phobias, is entirely the last place we want to be right now. If you could be so kind as to throw a rope down, that would be great, but if not, please pass on our feedback to the DFA committee that, all things considered, this has not been one of the DFA's best field trips.'

But Cymphany didn't hear this noise over the straining and buckling of the plastic of the portaloo and Kipp screaming from the ground, 'Dinosaurs do exist, Cymph. One is about to eat you, so hurry up and get out of there would you?'

At this point in the story you might be getting a little bit scared that one of the main characters is about to get eaten by a dinosaur. You're probably thinking, I should have known something like this was going to happen, as this book is called *The Unbelievably Scary Thing that Happened in Huggabie Falls*, but I had no idea it was going to be this unbelievable. I had no idea a main character was going to get eaten by a dinosaur, in a portaloo of all places!

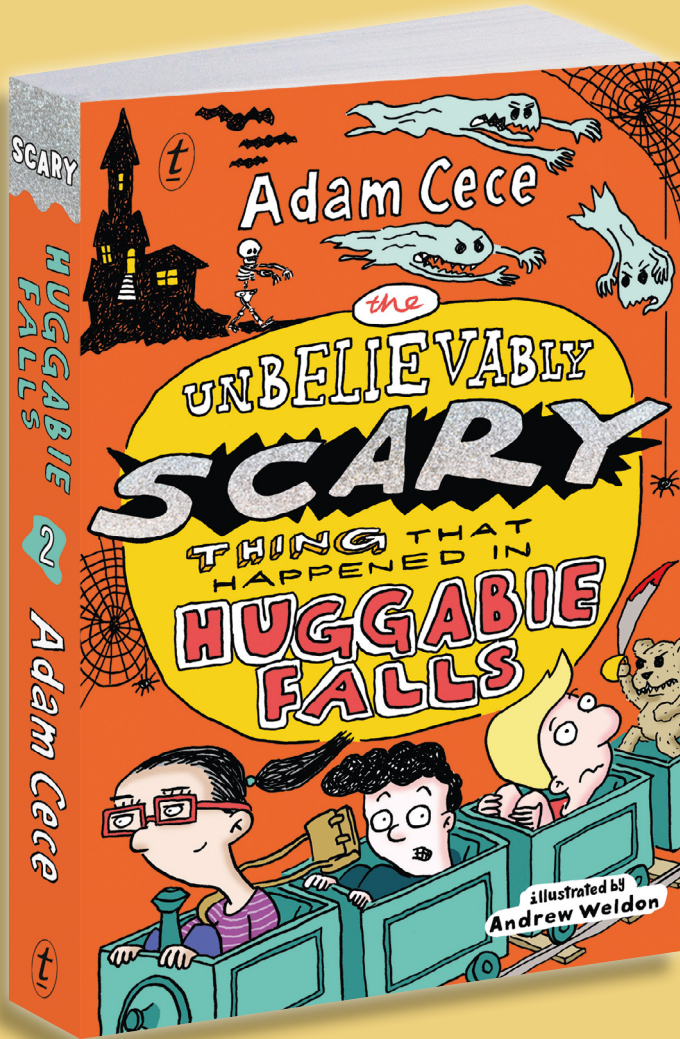
As the author of this book, I was worried that this scene might cause undue distress to readers, and it's for this reason that I did suggest to my publisher that a sticker be put on the cover of the book warning readers that characters, both

minor and major, in this book might be eaten by dinosaurs. But my publisher thought this might spoil the suspense of the story. And who wants to read a book when they already know what is going to happen? Personally, I think that if I saw a shopful of books and one of them had a sticker on the front warning that characters inside could be eaten by dinosaurs, that would be the first book I would pick up.

But it is distressing when a major character is about to be eaten, especially if that character is Cymphany Chan. I notice no one seemed concerned for the various members of the Dinosaur Fearers Anonymous group, who, as we heard moments ago, had already been swallowed. It's hardly surprising. People rarely care about the fate of nameless characters. It may interest you to know that one of those characters, Truman Trotter, who was actually the DFA member trying to call out to Cymphany, is one minor character that I had actually planned to make into a major character in a future book,

so I personally was very upset to find out that he got swallowed. I'm not so sure he will make it to a future book now. I mean perhaps those swallowed characters will all band together and formulate an escape plan, but I have to say their odds of survival are poor—and that's being optimistic.

Anyway, where was I? Oh yes, Cymphany, still refusing to believe it was possible she was about to be eaten by an extinct creature, heard the plastic of the portaloo squealing and buckling, which lasted only a second, before the portaloo's frame gave way and the dinosaur clamped its jaws shut.



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