The Dragonsitter's Surprise



Josh Lacey

Illustrated by Garry Parsons

Andersen Press
London



From: Edward Smith-Pickle

To: Morton Pickle

Date: Monday 10 July

Subject: Very exciting news!

Attachments: The egg



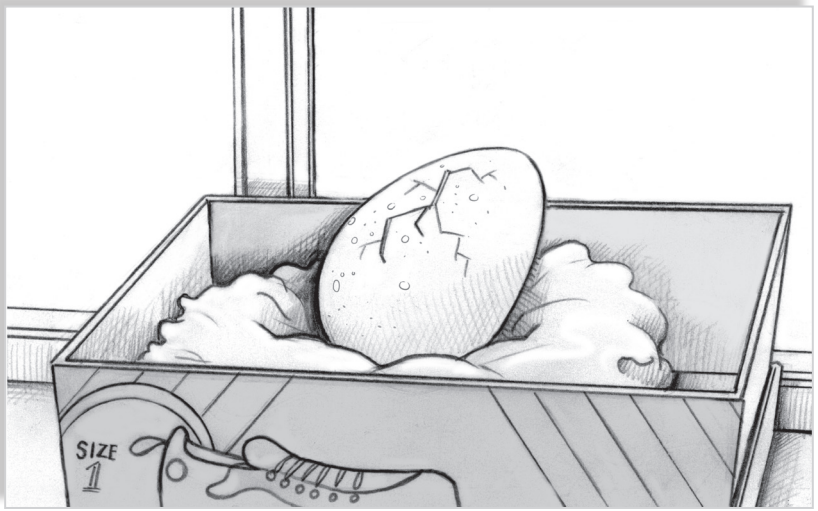
Dear Uncle Morton

Do you remember the egg?

I mean the one you gave me for my birthday.

You said it was dead, but you were wrong.

Look at this picture and you'll see why.



I have already prepared some nice cold sausages and a bar of milk chocolate for the baby dragon's arrival.

I can't wait to see it!

Mum wants to put the egg at the end of the garden till it hatches. She and Gordon spent ages cleaning the house, and they don't want it all messed up.

But what if the baby comes out and gets eaten by one of the cats from next door?

For now I've left it on the windowsill in my bedroom. I hope it will be safe there.

Love from

your favourite nephew

Eddie

From: Morton Pickle

To: Edward Smith-Pickle

Date: Tuesday 11 July



Subject: Re: Very exciting news!

Attachments: The best noodles in Mongolia

Dear Eddie,

Thank you for the delightful photo, but don't get your hopes up.

That egg is dead.

If there is a baby dragon inside, very sadly it will be dead too.

I bought that egg many years ago in a noodle restaurant behind Ulaanbaatar's main railway station.

The chef was planning to use it to make chow mein, but he let me buy it instead. The egg was dead then, and cannot have come alive since.



I can imagine how surprised you were to find a crack in the shell, but sunlight or a sudden change in temperature must have caused that particular fissure.

Please send my best wishes to Emily and the rest of your family. I hope your mother and Gordon are enjoying married life.

Things are busy here. I am hard at work preparing for my expedition to Uzbekistan. I shall be flying over the mountains in a hot air balloon, searching for unicorns.

Would you like to come with me?

With love from

your affectionate uncle

Morton

From: Edward Smith-Pickle

To: Morton Pickle

Date: Wednesday 12 July

Subject: More cracks

Attachments: Egg inspection

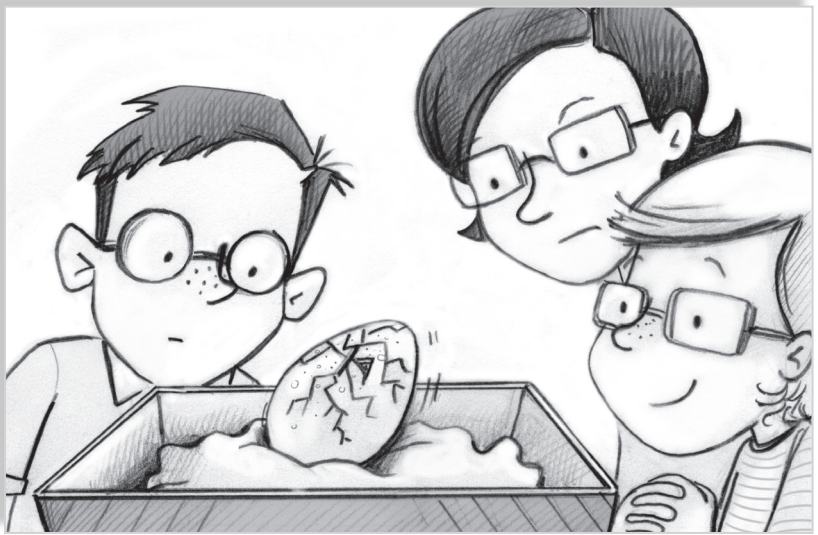


Dear Uncle Morton

I know you're the expert on dragons, but even so, I think you must be wrong about this egg.

It's now covered in cracks.

Mum swears she hasn't touched it.



Gordon was doing DIY over the weekend, but I don't think an egg could be woken up by the sound of hammering.

Emily says she hasn't even been in my room since last Friday.

There is only one possible explanation. The baby is on its way.

Love from

Eddie

PS Thank you for the invitation, but Mum says I'm not allowed in a hot air balloon and visiting Uzbekistan is out of the question. Which is a pity, because I would really like to see a unicorn.