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Opening extract from

What Mr Darwin Saw

Written by

Mick Manning and Brita Granström

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Please print off and read at your

For our own little apes:
Max, Bjorn, Frej
and Charlie Manning

Mick and Brita wish to thank the
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What Mr Darwin Saw

by Mick Manning and Brita Granström

FRANCES LINCOLN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

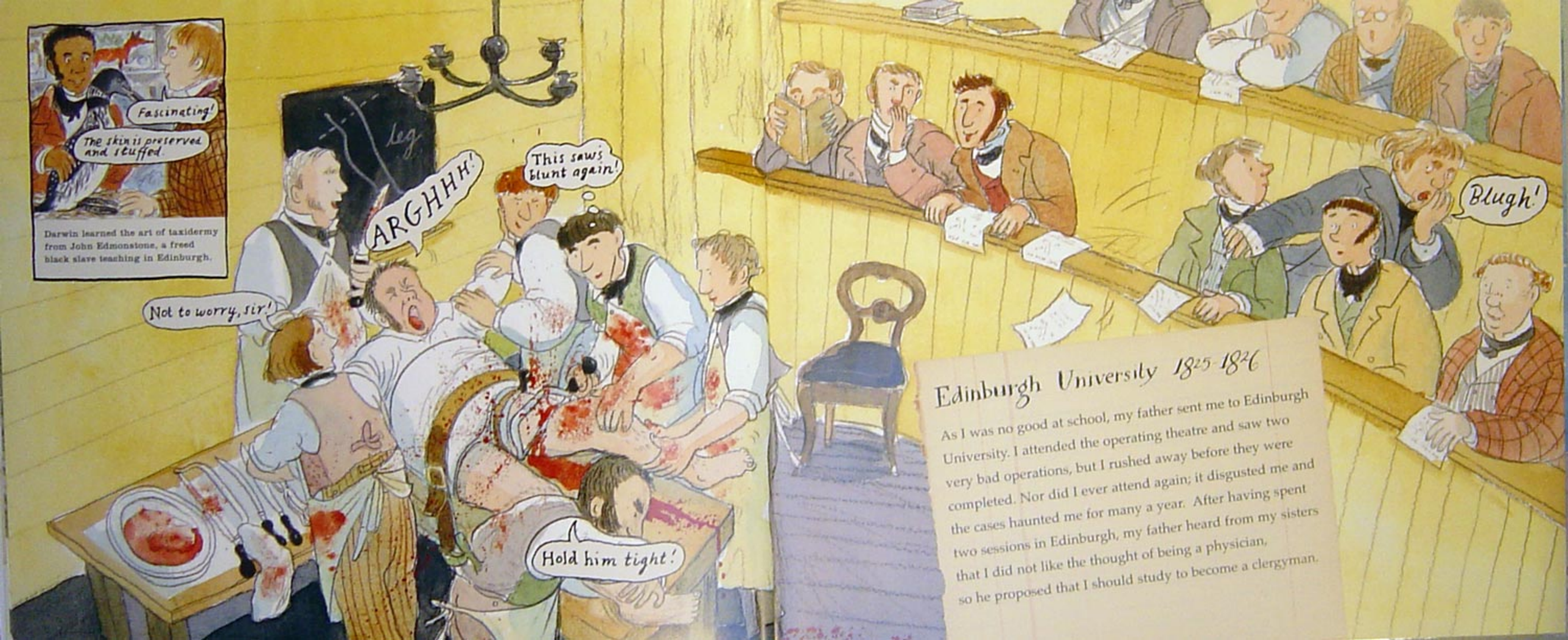
In association with the
Natural History Museum, London

Erasmus Darwin, Charles's grandfather, was a doctor, botanist and poet who was already writing about evolution in the 1790s.

As a young lad Charles spent a lot of time hunting rats . . . and shooting snipe.

Early Days 1809-1825

I was born on 12 February 1809. My mother died when I was eight years old. By the time I went to school my taste for natural history was well developed. I collected all sorts of things. When I left school I was considered by my father a very ordinary boy. My father once said to me, "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs and rat catching and you will be a disgrace to yourself and your family." But my father was the kindest man I ever knew and must have been angry when he used such words.



Edinburgh University 1825-1826

As I was no good at school, my father sent me to Edinburgh University. I attended the operating theatre and saw two very bad operations, but I rushed away before they were completed. Nor did I ever attend again; it disgusted me and the cases haunted me for many a year. After having spent two sessions in Edinburgh, my father heard from my sisters that I did not like the thought of being a physician, so he proposed that I should study to become a clergyman.