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opening extract from

Dinosaur Cove 14: Clash of the Monster Crocs

written by

Rex Stone

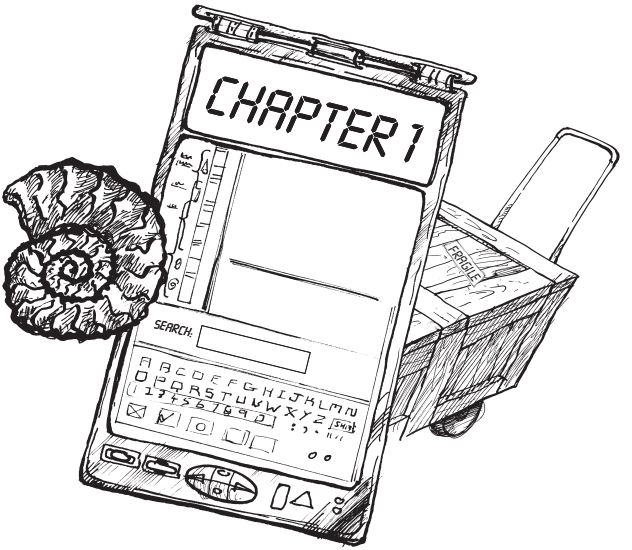
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'THE DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS!' Jamie Morgan finished writing the capital letters in felt pen, then fixed the banner to the wall of his dad's museum in Dinosaur Cove. Beneath the banner was a table-top model of a prehistoric landscape with a forest, a swamp, and a dried-out river bed snaking across it.

'Triassic Corner looks awesome!' Jamie's best friend Tom Clay said proudly. He and Jamie had spent ages making the landscape model using crumpled newspaper and lots of

THE DAWN OF

glue and paint. Tom picked up the cardboard cut-out of a pig-like reptile he had just finished working on.

'Two hundred and thirty million years ago fearsome Triassic monsters walked the land . . . ' Tom said in his wildlife commentator voice. 'The burrowing lystrosaurus lived in deep holes . . . ' He glued his cardboard model to the dried-up river bed that wound down the model landscape. ' . . . then came the first dinosaurs. The long–necked plateosaurus . . . '



THE DINOSAURS!

Tom placed a cut-out of the Triassic's biggest plant-eating dinosaur at the edge of the swamp.

'Hunted by the vicious eoraptor!' Jamie interrupted, sticking his model of the meat eater between the papier mâché bushes at the edge of the swamp.

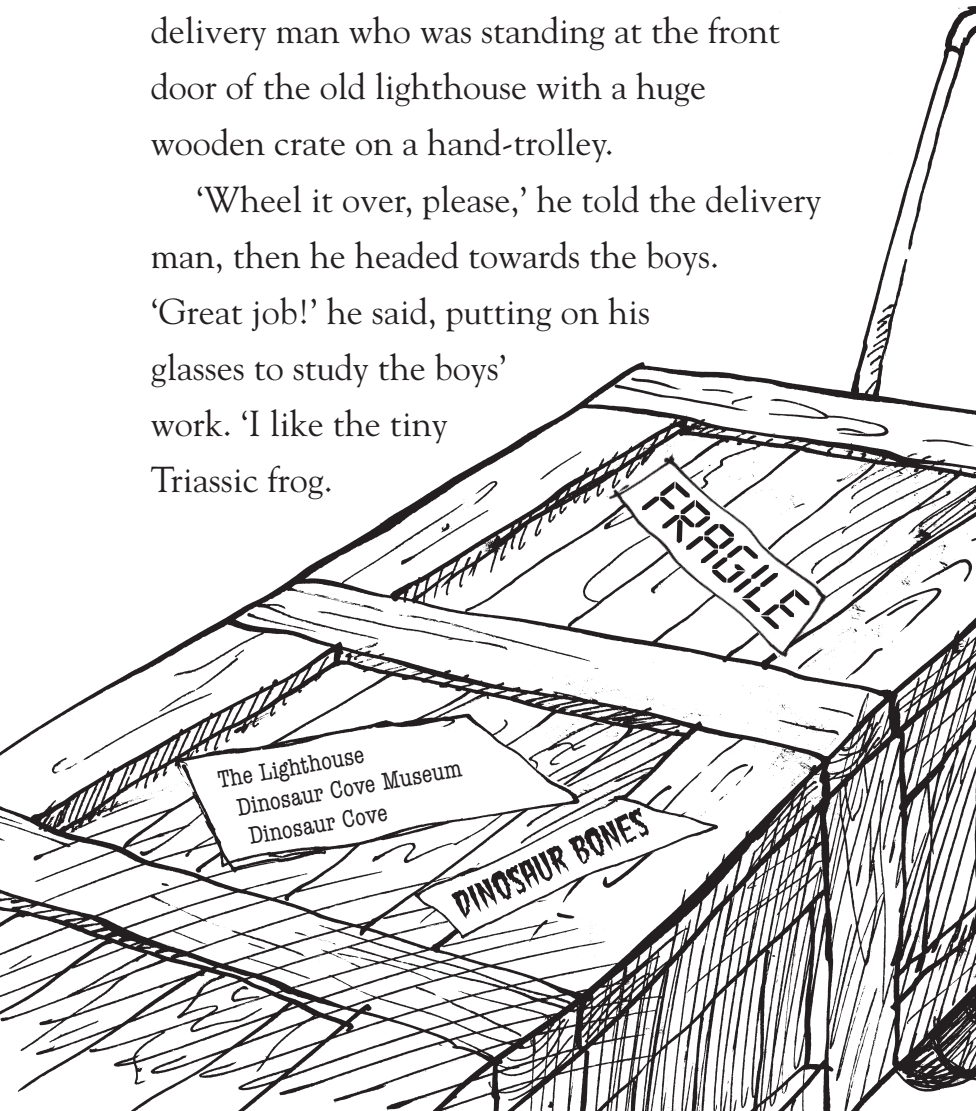
'Hey!' Tom said. 'I don't want your eoraptor eating my plateosaurus.'



‘That’s life, you wombat!’ Jamie laughed. ‘Hey, Dad,’ he called. ‘Come and see! We’ve finished Triassic Corner.’

Mr Morgan was signing some papers for a delivery man who was standing at the front door of the old lighthouse with a huge wooden crate on a hand-trolley.

‘Wheel it over, please,’ he told the delivery man, then he headed towards the boys. ‘Great job!’ he said, putting on his glasses to study the boys’ work. ‘I like the tiny Triassic frog.



And the dried-up river bed shows how hot it was in the Triassic. You've really done your research.'

Tom nudged Jamie and they shared a private smile. They knew a lot about the Triassic because they had visited it, *and* other prehistoric time periods. Finding the entrance to Dino World, a world of amazing living, breathing prehistoric beasts, was their top Dinosaur Cove secret!

'And you finished the landscape just in time,' Mr Morgan went on, lifting the lid of the wooden crate. 'Our star Triassic fossil has arrived!'

Jamie and Tom peered inside. Nestling in shredded cardboard was a massive skull with a long jaw full of dagger-like teeth resting on top of a pile of fossilized bones.



'Meet the king of the Triassic world,' Jamie's dad announced. 'The number one Triassic predator: Postosuchus!'

'It looks like a humongous crocodile,' Tom breathed.

'Postosuchus's skull is crocodilian,' Mr Morgan agreed. 'But it had long legs to run down its prey. Some scientists call it the "running crocodile".'

'Awesome!' Jamie exclaimed, pulling out a bone that was as long as his arm. It felt smooth and very heavy.

'A complete skeleton like this is very rare,' his dad told him, taking the bone from Jamie. 'I'll need peace and quiet while I work out how to assemble it . . . '

'No problem,' Jamie and Tom said together. 'We're going out!'

Jamie grabbed his backpack.

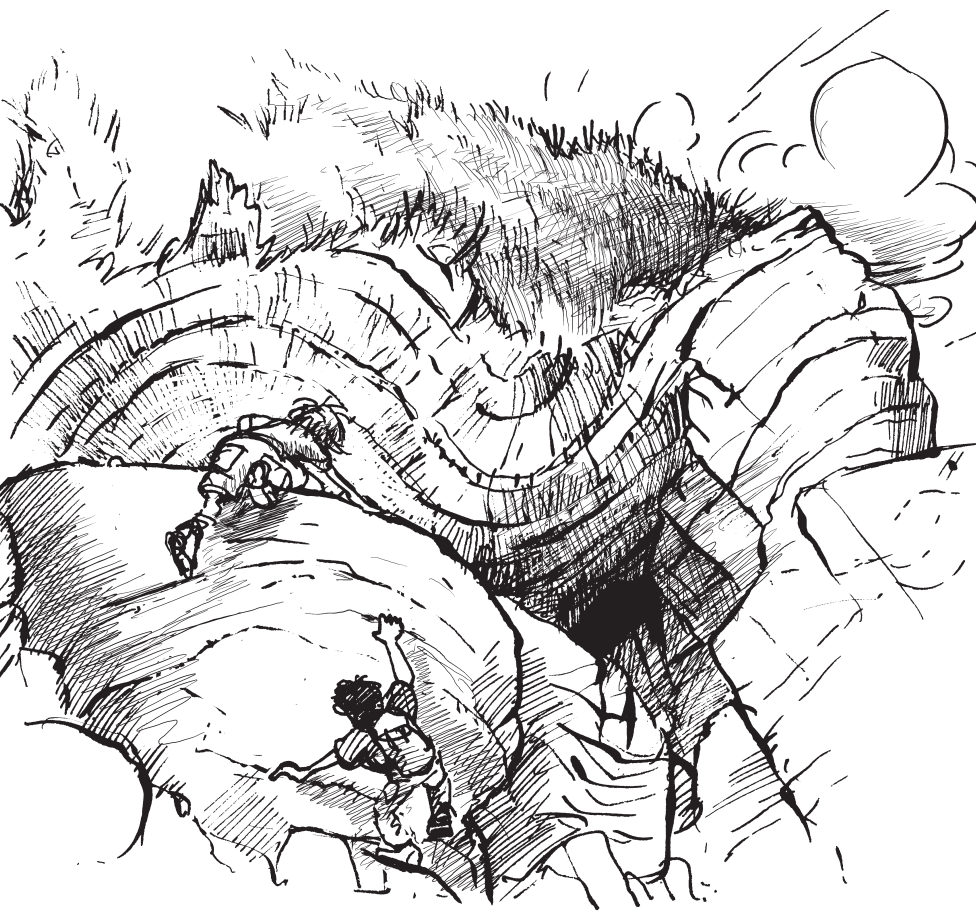
'Let's find some real live postoes!' he said excitedly.



'Got the Triassic ammonite?' Tom asked him.

'Check!' Jamie said. The fossil that was the key to the Triassic Dino World was safely in his bag.

The two friends raced out of the museum, down the cliff steps and along the sandy beach



towards the far headland. They scrambled up the rocks to the old smuggler's cave at Smuggler's Point and squeezed through the hole at the back to the dark secret cave beyond.

Jamie snapped on his torch and placed his foot in the first of the five fossil dinosaur

footprints that led across the floor to an apparently solid rock wall. His heart leapt with excitement as he counted the footprints.

'One, two, three, four . . . five!'



In a blinding flash of light, he was in Dino World again, standing in fresh dinosaur footprints in the hollowed-out trunk of an ancient tree.

'Five!' Tom was right behind him.

Jamie stepped out of the shade and doubled over as the hot, thin Triassic air took his breath away. Giant insects were whirring and buzzing above his head.