

Dinosaurs in Reykjavik

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Translated from the Icelandic by Meg Matich

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WARNING!

In this book, there are people-eating dinosaurs!

“Life finds a way.” – Dr Ian Malcolm, mathematician

“Arghhhh arghhh argh!” – Hungry tyrannosaurus

Foreword

Once, a long, long, loooooooooong, long (long before everyone you know was even born) time ago, dinosaurs ruled the earth. Dinosaurs, for those who don't know, were reptiles of many shapes and sizes. Some flew, others swam, and still others lived on land. But none of them drove around in cars (because they hadn't been invented yet).

Some dinosaurs were herbivores, which means that they only ate plants. Others were carnivores, fearsome meat-eaters that hunted and ate the herbivores – without, of course, a side salad.

The dinosaurs first walked the earth about 250 million years ago (see, I told you it was long time ago) and they ruled the earth for a very long time after that. Time passed, and nobody tangled with them – but they, of course, occasionally tried to eat one another. When that happened, they got really, really mad.

But one day, around 65 million years ago, something incredible happened. Something totally unbelievable. (Turn the page to see what that was).

THE DINOSAURS DIED!¹

Scientists aren't entirely certain how they died, but research tells us that the culprit was a gigantic meteorite that struck the earth. In its wake, it left a number of violent natural disasters, like earthquakes and volcanic eruptions!

But the dinosaurs that survived weren't all in the clear. When the meteorite struck the earth, it stirred up a gigantic cloud of dust that blocked out the sun. All plants, of course, need sunlight to grow, and when the sun disappeared behind an enormous cloud of dust, it killed them. When the plants died, the plant eaters died, too, and when the plant eaters died, there was nothing for the meat eaters to eat. And then all of the dinosaurs disappeared from the face of the earth.

But let's look on the bright side. If these creatures hadn't died out then there wouldn't be space for us humans. Today we only know the dinosaurs from their fossils. Archaeologists across the globe study the fossilized bones of these incredible creatures, which were protected under layers of earth, called strata, all over the world.

These great giants – which once ruled over everything– are gone forever.

Or are they?

REMEMBER

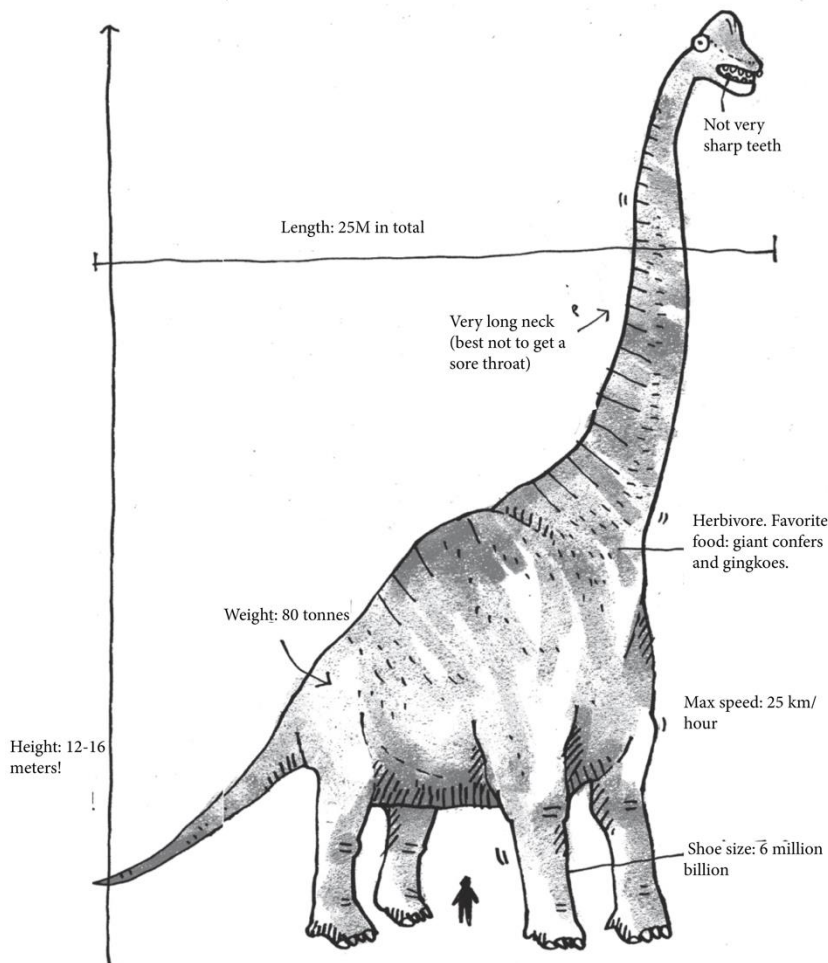
You need to know these animals before starting the book:²

Brachiosaurus

¹ *Translator's note: Large illustration with comet striking the earth, and cartoon graves with the phrases: Rest in peace, Tyrannosaurus rex; The last raptor; Brachiosaurus.*

² *Translator's note: The following pages include cartoonish illustrations/ diagrams of dinosaurs, teenagers and an angora cat. I've included an illustration of brachiosaurus to give an idea of the nature of the diagrams. The others follow the same format and bullet points are used to indicate points on the drawing.*

An herbivore with an incredibly long neck. It takes brachiosaurus a very long time to take a walk because he's so heavy – up to 80 tonnes!



Tyrannosaurus rex

An extremely dangerous dinosaur. Tyrannosaurus is a carnivore that can run very fast, has a huge mouth and sharp teeth that are bigger than this book! Tyrannosaurus' main weakness is its tiny hands – which means that it has a lot of trouble making its bed and playing the piano.

- Teeth: 18-35 cm
- Favorite food: meat. Mostly anatosaurus, triceratops, and lamb chops (a lot of them)
- Incredibly small hands
- WARNING! Can eat 230 kg of meat in one bite
- Speed: 30 km/hr
- Weight: 7 tonnes

- Length (including its tail): 12 meters
- Height: 6 meters

Velociraptor

The most dangerous dinosaur in the entire book. They're astonishingly clever, can run up to 50 kilometers an hour (which means that they can run around all of Iceland in just about a day), and they have very, very sharp claws. If you see a raptor, you should run away as fast as you possibly can!

- 80 sharp teeth!
- Retractable claws!
- Weight: 60 kg
- Height: 2 meters
- Length: 3 meters
- Carnivore. Very strong feet. Can travel at 50 kilometers an hour!

Angora cat (*felis catus furrypants*)

Grey and furry. Unbelievably fun and well-behaved – just as long as you remember to feed it and pet it for at least two hours a day. Can get very worked up, but is quick to forgive.

- Likes to be scratched behind the ears (both)
- Very furry
- Height: 23 cm
- Weight: depends on how much it's eaten
- Very dramatic

Teenagers (*Far-too longus leggus*)

A person from 13-17 years of age. Very big feet. Astonishingly noisy. Lots and lots of mood swings. **Extremely dangerous!**

- Very, very noisy.
- ATTENTION! Not the Helga that's in the book!³
- Veeeerrrrryyyyy long legs.
- Acne
- Long limbs
- Irritable meat eater – and/or vegetarian
- Height: between 1 and 2 meters

³ Translator's note: Illustration is of stereotypical boy and girl – acne, braces, jeans, sweatshirt. This point refers to the girl.

Chapter 1

Extremely Dangerous Teenagers

Once upon a time there was a scientist named Aevan. He had a television show where he did all sorts of experiments to teach kids about science. He climbed the giant glass dome, Perlan, with a vacuum, melted a car in Patrek's Fjord, sailed a paper boat over a lake in the middle of Reykjavik, and ate an entire plate of larvae.

This book is, all the same, not about Aevan when he was on television. This book takes place way before that, when Aevan was much younger.

When our story begins, Aevan is just about to turn eleven years old. Here's a picture of him. Look at how cute he is! But even though he had a total baby face, he didn't have very many friends.

Actually, he didn't have any friends. He didn't have time for such things. He had a lot of books, and he had a cat, and he thought that was enough. The cat, a big angora cat (which meant that he was very furry), was named Einstein. Einstein was, like many other cats, incredibly dramatic. If his dish wasn't full to the brim, he whined, as if suffering horribly, because he was certain to die of hunger. If he didn't get to drink water from the faucet in the bathroom, he whined, as if suffering unbearably, because he was certain to die of thirst. And if Aevan momentarily neglected his petting duties, Einstein wailed, as if he were suffering terribly, because he was certain to die of a broken heart. Einstein was an unusually dramatic cat.

Aevan lived in a two-storey house in Reykjavik, in Iceland. It had a cellar that Aevan never, ever went into because it was very dark and sinister, and a garden where Einstein could play in the summer. But Aevan didn't play outside very often. He mainly wanted to sit inside all day and read, and after school he always went straight home. He never walked with anyone, but often had his nose in a book along the way. Even after the third time that he walked straight into a light pole, and even after he'd nearly been hit by a bus. Aevan was, in his defence, reading a very exciting book at the time.

Aevar wasn't particularly worried about anything. But there was one thing that absolutely, undeniably chilled him to the bone. In the house next to him, there lived a person, who wasn't really what he'd call a person. She was a teenager! Aevar had never spoken to a teenager but he was sure that they were *incredibly dangerous*. He'd read about it in a book.

Whenever he walked past the neighbours' house, he closed the book that he was reading and sprinted home. That worked most of the time.

But one day when Aevar was ten years old, he was so completely immersed in the book he was reading (which was, by sheer coincidence, about dinosaurs) that he forgot everything else. He thought all of the animals were exciting, but tyrannosaurus fascinated him the most. There was just something so magnetic, so dangerous about them – their long claws and sharp teeth! Aevar almost forgot where he was until a familiar voice shouted at him:

“Watch out!”

All of a sudden, Aevar felt a sharp pain in his right foot. He fell over, dropping the dinosaur book as the neighbours' house tumbled before his eyes. And then she stood directly in front of him, tapping her foot.

THE TEENAGER!

The thing he had stumbled into was right in front of her – a brand new, unbelievably cool bicycle. It was lying in the street. Oh no!

The teenager stood over Aevar, smirking teenagerly as if measuring him up – just like a cat that's sizing up a mouse before pouncing.

“If there is a single scratch on it, you're in big trouble!” she said, lifting up the bike and surveying it carefully. “I saved up for this for a very long time.” She wiped dust off the seat. Aevar was still sitting on the pavement, and didn't dare move. The teenager looked at him. “Aren't you going to say you're sorry?” she asked. “You know that it's rude not to say you're sorry.”

Aevar tried to say something – anything – but nothing, not a single sound, came out. He just opened and closed his mouth like a goldfish. The teenager (Helga from tenth grade, Aevar recalled) took a step toward him!

“Are you some kind of klutz?” she asked loudly, breaking out into laughter.

Aevar couldn't take any more. He squeaked out something unintelligible and sprang up off the pavement. He ran as fast as he could, up the stairs, tore open the front door, and slammed it after him. The teenager yelled something teenagery at him, but he didn't listen.

“Aevar dear, is everything...” his mum began as he trudged past her on a mission to close all of the windows in the house and turn off all the lights.

“Yeaeverythingisfinewithmeokaybye!” he called out at a hundred kilometers an hour as he zigzagged the house up to his room where he immediately locked the door. He didn't dare leave the house for the next three days. He even imagined, more to the point, hiding himself in the cellar but decided in the end that he didn't dare enter it either.

After that, Aevar always did his best to avoid Helga's house. And after a while, he got quite good at it.

It was a long time before Aevar met Helga again.* But when that happened, she freaked out in a way that had never before been seen in Iceland, and has never been witnessed again.**

But not so fast.

First, the dinosaurs.

* Which was good.

** Which wasn't so good.

Chapter 2

You're Invited to an Awesome Birthday Bash!

The time had come: Aevan was turning eleven. This is what his wish list looked like:

WHAT DO I WANT?

Books

An eyeglass cleaner

New toys for Einstein

More books

A bookshelf

A time machine (also a good gift for when I'm older,

it doesn't really matter when I get it)

Aevan had never had a real birthday party. Not because he couldn't – but simply because he never wanted to. He didn't think the kids in his class were especially interesting or fun, and he couldn't imagine that they were any better outside of school. But it's safe to say that his classmates were perfectly fine kids. Aevan had just never tried to get to know them. His mum and dad were a little worried about him being on his own all the time.

"Aevan dear, stop this nonsense," his mum said at the breakfast table. "You'll have a birthday party, now won't you?" Aevan was so caught up in reading the ingredient list on the milk carton that he didn't hear her. But his mum didn't give up so easily. At one point in her life, she'd even been a member of parliament and was pretty used to talking even when nobody was listening. She also knew all types of tricks to get people to change their minds.* One of them was to end a sentence with the words, "don't you agree?" She had all the same

* She'd even once convinced the president of Iceland to die his hair snow white – which he still does to this day.

never known anyone as stubborn as her son. Aevar knew all of her tricks and was very seldom fooled.

“Of course Aevar is going to have a birthday party!” his dad said loud and clear, smiling from ear to ear. “You only turn eleven once!” Then he returned to slathering his sandwich, which was a grand total of four pieces of bread, and took a big bite. He grew up in the countryside, right by the glacier Vatnajokull, and was, because of that, always a big eater. He was a music teacher, who taught guitar and played in three and a half bands.** He enjoyed entertaining lots of people, and always talked just a liiiiiiiiittle too loud when he was at home.

“Hm?” Aevar was somewhere else in his thoughts. He laid the milk carton aside and tried to find something else to read. His mum picked up a stack of paper and slapped it down on the table in front of him. She hadn’t given up yet.

“So,” she said, smiling, “you can read that.” Aevar took the topmost paper from the pile and skimmed it. There was an old picture of him in the bath (“Mum, are you kidding me?”) sketched on the front, and above it, the words:

YOU’RE INVITED TO AN AWESOME BIRTHDAY BASH!

It gave directions to the house, and a date and time. The party was supposed to be that weekend. Aevar laid the paper back on top of the stack.

“No, thanks,” he said, and slipped on his glasses. “I’m okay.”

In reality, he would rather have hidden himself away in the grimmest corner of the cellar with all the lights turned out than invite his classmates to his birthday party. His mum smiled.

“Aevar, dear, don’t be like that. Of course, you’ll celebrate your birthday. Now take the invitations that your dad and I spent all that time making for you and give them out to your friends at school. It’ll be fun. Don’t you agree?”

“I’ll sing Happy Birthday when they come in and play it again and again as each guest arrives!” his dad said, cheerfully (and juuuust a little too loud), as he began to make himself another sandwich. Aevar looked at his dad in terror, as if he’d promised to set fire to anyone

** I say “three and a half” because in one of them he plays the ukulele, which is half of one guitar.

who set foot in the house. Aevan's mum smiled and whispered that she'd hide all of his instruments.

"You can hand them out during first period," she said as she stuck the invites into his backpack. "What's your first class today?"

Aevan gasped. He set his spoon in his bowl and looked at the murky milk in the bottom.

"Gym..." he muttered quietly.

Chapter 3

Dodgeball for Your Life

“Today!” bellowed Einar, the gym teacher. “We are! Going to! Play dodgeball!” Einar was a small man with a big voice. He never just spoke; he shouted literally everything. Aevar was certain that if Einar were in a comic strip, there would be exclamation points after everything he said. Rumor had it that he’d once coached the Icelandic national handball team, but was fired for being too explosive.

As soon as Einar said the word “dodgeball,” the room broke out into chaos. The kids whooped and whistled and hurried to divide into teams.

“Team two! Is on this side!” cried Einar, waving like a madman. “And team one! Here!”

The kids ran back and forth, finally making their way to the court.

“Divide! Into! Teams! Now!”

Aevar stood alone, turning in a circle. Which team should he be on? He couldn’t decide! That always happened – he overthought things. He couldn’t imagine asking somebody else for help; he’d make up his own mind, but he couldn’t do that before he’d carefully considered all the facts. Aevar looked around, and after a moment it seemed like the gymnasium had disappeared, replaced by a grid – just like in a maths book. If you could have heard everything that he was thinking, it would have been just like listening to fourteen radio stations at once.

Here’s a little snippet of what was going on in his head:

So, if I join the team here, across from me, there will be too many boys in it, but if I don’t go to that one then there are too few kids who can run backwards, fast, on that team, but I was also thinking there are a lot of loud people and they’re going to make a lot of noise when someone gets out and I also need to consider how many are barefoot and how many are in shoes and how many have bad breath and how many have stinky feet because I don’t want to be on the barefoot team if too many of them have stinky feet and...

“Go!” Einar shouted suddenly. He blew the whistle around his neck. Aevar turned white. All of his calculations dried up like dew on morning grass. He was standing alone in the

middle of the court! Aevan looked up and saw his classmate, Andri Mar, holding on to a dodgeball and taking aim, with half of the class behind him. He held his breath. Andri was by far the best in sports in their entire grade and Aevan knew that if Andri had decided to aim for him, he wouldn't miss his target.

“Wait!” called Aevan. “I might be on your team!”

Andri took his final aim. For a moment, everything was in slow motion. Aevan tried to open his mouth to say something else, to explain to Andri in a logical way that they just needed to talk about it, that all of the animals in the jungle just needed to make friends, but it was too late.

Andri fired!

Aevan saw the ball approaching and tried to dodge!

But it was too late. The red dodgeball hit him right in the stomach. He fell to the floor with a thump. Einar bellowed from the corner of the room:

“Aevan! Out!” Everyone cheered – nobody was really on his team after all.

Aevan hid the birthday invitations in his backpack all day, and told nobody about the celebration. When he came home, he tossed them into the recycling bin behind the house. He didn't want any of those kids to come to his home.

Chapter 4

Surprise Guests

“Aevar, can you come down here?”

The weekend had arrived. Today, Aevar turned eleven years old. Aevar had planned to stay in his room and spend the day by himself, reading. But today, Aevar’s mum had put together a little surprise. When Aevar had refused to tell her how many of his classmates were coming to the party, she’d decided to snoop around. Tricking mums is easier said than done, after all – they’re incredibly clever. And to confirm her suspicions, Aevar’s dad had found the invitations when he was taking the old newspapers to the recycling bin.

Aevar’s parents thought it inconceivable that a boy of eleven wouldn’t celebrate his birthday with friends, so they’d taken it upon themselves to call all of his classmates and invite them without Aevar knowing. That was another thing Aevar’s mum had learned in parliament. Sometimes it’s best just to act, asking neither king nor priest, as the saying goes. Aevar’s dad also saw it as an excellent opportunity to break out his guitar and sing a little ditty for the guests.

Aevar marked his book (the one about dinosaurs) and stepped out of his room, curious.

“Of course,” he heard his mum say, “would you like to take a seat?” Aevar crept down the stairs. Had somebody come to visit?

“Yes, thanks,” answered a voice – a voice that Aevar recognized. It was Andri Mar! The dodgeball kid! Aevar whipped around, lost his footing, half-rolled down the stairs, and rammed right into Andri. Andri nearly fell over, but Hildur, the new girl at school, grabbed on to his sweater and jerked him back to his feet. She had no trouble holding on to Andri; she was clearly super strong.

“Be careful,” Andri shot at Aevar as he straightened the sweater that Hildur had nearly ripped in two in all of the hullabaloo.

“It’s a surprise party!” his mother yelled from the living room. Aevar looked around in bewilderment. A lot of people might think it’s a dream to have a surprise birthday party in their

honour, but, if only a few people show up, it doesn't feel so great. It's a little embarrassing, even. In this case, only three guests had showed up to the surprise party and it didn't take Aevar very long to realize that the kids that stood in his living room were all children of his parents' friends from Cooking Club. His mum disappeared, smiling, into the kitchen, and they were left alone: three unexpected guests and a very confused birthday boy.

Andri sat down on the sofa and continued to fuss with his sweater. Aevar could tell he didn't want to be there. Hildur – the new girl – opened her clenched fist and handed Andri an entire handful of wool, torn from his sweater.

"I'm sorry," she said, patting him solidly on the back. "If I hadn't, you would've hurt yourself, you know." Andri looked at her and Aevar saw that if she had been a he, Andri would have already given her a knuckle sandwich. Aevar also saw that Hildur would've slugged him right back.

The third guest, a boy called Marek, sat on the sofa next to Andri, smiling politely. Marek and Aevar had been in the same class since first grade. Marek was even more curious than Aevar. When he really thought about it, Aevar'd never actually heard Marek say anything that wasn't a question.

"Did you buy that sweater in Iceland?" Marek asked and Andri looked at him in astonishment. "Do you think you can still exchange it if there's a hole in it?" Andri shrugged his shoulders in annoyance and stuffed the shreds into his pocket. Aevar stared blankly at them. This isn't at all what he wanted!

"What are you doing here?" he said finally, even though he knew it was a very rude question. The kids stared at him, wide-eyed. Not a word. The cat, Einstein, trotted down the stairs and meowed, quietly. He always needed to be the centre of at least *some* attention and was now demanding to be petted. Finally, Hildur broke the silence, even though she hardly knew Aevar. She'd only started at his school last week.

"We," she said, handing Aevar a package, "are here to celebrate. Happy birthday!" Marek and Andri muttered something and Aevar looked down at the package, feeling ashamed of himself. Maybe he'd been a little bit impolite.

“It’s from all of us, right?” asked Marek, peering at the others. They nodded their heads.

Aevar knew right away that the package wasn’t a book, but that was okay. He smiled. Maybe it was kind of fun to get an unexpected gift on your birthday.

The kids headed into the kitchen and hovered around the table. It was packed with sweets, paper plates and plastic cups that his dad had tried to transform into a miniature village of food and drinks.

“We thought more people would be here,” he said apologetically and just a liiiiiiiiiitttle too loudly. Aevar turned beet red.

“Dad!” he hissed.

“It’s sometimes just like that – nothing to be ashamed of. Once, when a sheep was giving birth on the farm where I grew up – well, we thought the ewe would give birth to a full litter of lambs. But it didn’t come to pass. Only ten lambs made it – the others died!” The guests didn’t say a word. “So we buried them in a big grave behind the cowshed and then everything started to rot, oh boy, let me tell you...”

Marek stared at this strange man, agape, and Aevar buried his face in his hands. Andri looked like he was mesmerized by the cake on the table in front of him while Hildur looked like she was about to burst out laughing.

“Oh, the smell, oh boy, it was like...”

“Maybe we should eat now?” Aevar interrupted. His dad laughed.

“Of course! What’s wrong with me?” He picked up the cake knife and eyed the group. “You all must be pretty hungry.”

Then it was time to open presents.

Aevar’s mum and dad gave him two new books and Einstein, who was purring in Marek’s lap, got a fuzzy ball as a gift from Aevar. The year before, when Aevar had turned ten, Einstein got very sore because he hadn’t received a gift. So Aevar made a point of getting him one this year. But the cat was more excited about the ribbon tied around the ball than the ball itself.

When Aevar finally finished carefully unpeeling the tape from his classmates' gift, he unfolded the paper slowly and carefully. The contents were white, and upside down. When he turned it over, he saw that it was a white T-shirt with a picture of a horse. Aevar stared at the shirt, without seeming to understand.

"Ah... thanks," he said, uncertainly.

"I picked it out," Hildur said before he could say anything more. "My dad has a stable and riding school, so he owns a ton of horses. Your shirt in gym class... I noticed it was big on you." Aevar took a closer look at the shirt, which had an image of a horse with a huge grin and, above it, the words IN IT TO WHINNY IT. Aevar chuckled quietly to himself.

"Thanks," he said again – with a smile.

"Yeah, maybe it'll be easier for you to move around if you're wearing a shirt that fits," Andri said, jokingly. "Then maybe you won't be the first out in dodgeball."

Hildur gave him a glare that could melt the huge glacier, Eyjafjallajökull.

"What? I didn't do anything. You have to *dodge*. It's called *dodgeball*."

"Hey, what's that?" They heard a voice from the corner of the room. Nobody had noticed that Marek had gotten up to explore the house. The cat now followed his newest fan wherever he went and was laying love-struck at his feet.

"What's what?" Aevar asked and looked around. "Where on earth..." He froze. Marek was standing next to the cellar door! Aevar set his new shirt aside.

"Well..." he started, trying to sound as level-headed as he could. "That's just the basement. Nothing there. Come on. Nothing at all interesting." Marek took a step closer to the old door.

"Can I take a peek?" he asked, wrapping his palm around the verdigris knob.

"I'd rather..." Aevar began, but before he could say 'not', the doors opened up. A musty smell carried on a dusty draught, and after a moment, it felt like the entire room had cooled.

"Nice!" shouted Andri, taking off toward the doorway. Aevar didn't want to budge. The other kids and the cat were hovering excitedly at the top of the stairs. They looked down into the depths of the cellar.

“Should we look?” Hildur finally asked. The boys looked at one another. They weren’t going to say no – not least of all because Hildur had suggested it.

“Okay,” Andri said, looking at Marek. “You first.” Marek wasn’t too pleased with that.

“Don’t ladies always go first?” he asked. The boys looked at Hildur, who shrugged her shoulders and headed into the darkness like nothing could be simpler. Andri followed immediately after her. Aevar was frightened.

“Hey... shouldn’t we...” he began, but nothing more interesting or exciting than adventuring into the sinister cellar came to mind. “Should we see if the horse shirt fits?” he croaked out. Marek looked at him.

“Aren’t you coming?” Marek asked right before he (and Einstein) disappeared down the stairs, leaving Aevar standing all alone on his birthday.

Aevar stepped carefully through the doorway, peering into the darkness. It was so black that he couldn’t make out a single thing, no matter how hard he tried.

(Turn the page to see how dark it was.)⁴

What was really down there?

Vampires?

Zombies?

Teenagers?!

The only thing that Aevar felt certain of was this: if he didn’t go down to the cellar, word of his cowardice would travel all around school and he’d never hear the end of it.

“This is the worst birthday party in history...” he muttered to himself as he descended into the basement.

⁴ [Translator’s note: spread of completely black pages follows]

Chapter 5

In the Cellar

At first, Aevan couldn't see anything. Then, a sharp beam of light sliced the darkness in two.

"I found a flashlight!" Andri called, shining the light in their faces. Hildur snatched the light from him.

"Watch out!" she hissed. "You shouldn't shine the light in people's eyes! You can blind them!"

"Chill," Andri muttered. "I know how to use a flashlight. Give it to me!" While the kids fought over the flashlight, Aevan crept down the stairs cautiously, making sure not to fall on his face. He'd never been in the basement before; in the gleam of the flashlight, he saw that it was full of old boxes, garbage. Einstein was very pleased that he now had a new room to explore, and cut in and out of the flashlight's beam, while taking in all of the new smells.

"What's that?" Marek asked, knocking on a big red chest.

"Those are just Christmas decorations shouldn't we head back now?" Aevan shouted, lingering on the steps just in case they agreed with him and decided to come back upstairs. Hildur continued to wave the flashlight back and forth like a light saber.

"Wow! You guys have so much stuff," she said.

Andri, following her lead, burst out, "Hey! Look here! Drums!" He pointed to an old drum set in the corner that Aevan's dad had once played. "I've always wanted one," he said, walking up to it. "Aevan, if it's taking up too much space, I can always take it off your hands. Or if you're not really using it." Aevan was just about to answer him when he was cut off by a horrible cry.

And when I say cry, I mean "meow".

"MMMMMMMMEEEEEEEEEOOOOOOOOWWWWWWWW!!!"

Aevan was so startled that he turned white from head to toe; in fact, he was so pale that he practically glowed in the dark.

“Wow!” Hildur called. “What’s going on here?!” She shone her light all around the room, trying to find Einstein.

“You could use that cat as an alarm clock!” Andri shouted amid the hubbub. Aevar rushed straight into the depths of the cellar to look for Einstein, but didn’t watch where he was going and stumbled over two boxes.

“He’s here!” shouted Hildur as she lit up the back corner of the room. The kids felt their way through the piles of dusty boxes, broken gadgets and garbage bags full of empty bottles until they finally reached the cat. He was rubbing against an old, worn cardboard box.

“Einstein, what in the world are you doing?” Aevar asked softly and picked the cat up. Einstein looked at Aevar, meowed quietly, and hopped out of his arms, once again returning to the box to massage himself against it.

“What’s in this box?” Marek asked.

Aevar took a good look at the box, but didn’t recognize it from anywhere. He had, however, read enough adventure stories to know that if you find a very old box deep in a dank cellar, then there is also very likely one of the following in it:

- Treasure
- A treasure map
- Something else related to treasure (e.g. a peg leg)

“Should we open it?” he asked with excitement as he looked at the other kids. They nodded their heads. Einstein meowed. “Alright.” He looked at Hildur. “Ready?” She nodded her head and pointed the flashlight at the box. In its light, Aevar discovered that the flaps of the cardboard box had been folded together to keep it closed. He was so excited that, for just a moment, he forgot that he was afraid of the cellar.

“Be careful,” Andri whispered. Aevar shook his head, focused. He carefully unfolded the first flap (which was soft with moisture) and lifted it. The suspense was so intense that everyone was silent for almost an entire page!

He lifted the next flap.

Then the third.

And finally the fourth!

The box was open!

The kids held their breath as Hildur pointed the flashlight into the box, where they saw...

All at once the lights flipped on!

The kids were momentarily blinded.

“What’re you kids doing down there?” they heard Aevan’s dad say (juuuust a little too loud, which was understandable because he was looking for them). He came walking down the stairs.

“Ah!” Aevan yelped. The bright light burned his eyes. His dad laughed and headed over to them.

“There’s even more garbage down here than I remember,” he said to himself and climbed over three broken washing machines. “Don’t you want the lights on? You can’t see anything down here in the dark.”

Aevan didn’t have time to talk to his dad. He wanted to see what was in the box. And even though it hurt his eyes, he blinked to adjust to the light until he could see what was inside. What was it? It was big, dark. Maybe grey. And a little bit rough. If he didn’t know better, he would’ve thought that it was...

“Are you looking at the rocks?” his dad said, walking back up to them.

“Rocks?” Aevan repeated. He took a better look at the objects in the box, finally seeing them properly. They *were* rocks. Aevan was extremely disappointed. His dad slid the box out with his foot.

“I’ve had those for many years. I’d totally forgotten that they were even here.”

Aevan didn’t understand.

“Why on earth are you keeping rocks in the basement?” he asked finally. Andri, Hildur and Marek looked at Aevan’s dad curiously, though it was clear they were unimpressed with the contents of the box.

“Sentimental value.” He smiled and lowered his voice, ominously. “When your grandma was a young girl in the countryside, around Vatnajökull, there was a huge eruption! You know how it is in those places, always erupting.” Aevan nodded his head. “One day, your grandma was making her way up a mountain above the village and she came across a pile of the strangest looking stones. These stones.” He slid the box a little further into the room. “She tried for years to figure out what these rocks were, but no luck. She thought they were maybe lava rocks, but there was always something so odd about them.” Aevan’s dad smiled from ear to ear. “Maybe you can figure out what it is, you know so much. I don’t have the energy to work it out myself.” He looked at the group, and raised his voice to a normal volume. “You kids can work together on that. Right?”

Andri, Marek and Hildur looked at Aevan’s dad, then back at the box. They weren’t especially excited about studying a bunch of rocks. Neither was Aevan. Then, as if out of nowhere, Aevan’s dad pulled out a guitar. Nobody had any idea where he’d gotten it. Aevan stared at him.

“Whatareyoudoing?” he whispered, as fast as he could.

“I wrote – once – a song about the rocks and I’m going to sing it for you. It’s based on an old poem, ‘Earth and Stone’, and is totally awesome.” His dad got into position to play. Aevan had a look of horror on his face.

“Did you already warm up your voice?” he asked loudly, stopping the song before it could begin. Aevan’s dad quieted down, thought about it, and shook his head, setting aside the guitar.

“Smart thinking,” he said, making his way back through the garbage to the stairs. “Chamomile tea and honey!” he hummed, and the clatter that followed upstairs seemed to indicate that he was mixing up some sort of concoction.

The kids stood around.

With the cat.

And the rocks.

Einstein rubbed himself against the box and meowed. He seemed to be the only one who was excited about the find. Seven giant hunks of basalt resting in a box.

“Weren’t rocks at the top of your wish list, Aevan?” Marek asked teasingly. Aevan snickered.

“Yep,” he said, picking up a hunk of rock. It was rough and felt like it was cutting his palms. “Very first. At the top.”

The stone was heavier than it looked, so he had to hold it with both hands. He lifted it above his head, and in a deep voice declared, “Simba – one day you will be king!” The kids chuckled. Aevan smiled to himself – maybe it wasn’t so bad to have guests.

And then it happened. The stone slipped out of his hands and, before it even occurred to him to try to catch it, it slammed into the cement floor.

It broke into a million pieces.

And an egg rolled out!

Andri ran up to it. “You’ve got to be kidding me,” he said, picking up the egg. Hildur inched her way over.

“Wow! Look at how weird!” she said. Aevan carefully took the egg from Andri and examined it more closely. It wasn’t like the eggs he’d seen in the shops, the ones his parents used to make waffles and pancakes – it was bigger and a lot heavier. And the texture was strange – almost as if it were covered in scales.

“Is this some kind of joke?” Marek asked. Aevan shook his head. “What is it then?”

“It certainly isn’t a normal chicken egg, that I can tell you,” Aevan said, putting on his glasses. “It’s too big.”

Hildur agreed.

“I think,” she said, and weighing the egg in her right hand, “it’s light as a feather.” Aevan looked at her, racking his brain to remember if they had ever gone to the Fishermen’s Festival together.

“If it’s not a normal chicken’s egg, what is it?” Marek asked.

“I don’t know. I mean, if I didn’t know any better, I’d say it was...” All at once he stopped talking. He stared at the egg.

“What?” Andri asked. Aevan looked at Hildur, who was still holding on to it.

“Come with me. And bring the egg,” Aevan said before bolting through the mess to make his way to the stairs, then up to the top, and onto the second floor, and into his room. The kids looked at one another and followed after him, their curiosity provoked.

When they went into his room, Aevan was already sitting on the floor, surrounded by biology and geology books.

“What are you doing?” Marek asked. Aevan picked up a thick book, rifled through it, and set it aside before taking up the next.

“Should you really treat your books like that?” Andri asked, looking at a book that’d been tossed under the bed. Aevan simply took up another and flipped through the pages until he stopped, suddenly. His eyes widened. He slowly stood up and handed Marek the book.

“Look at page eighty,” he said seriously. Marek flipped through the pages and stared down at the open page.

“Are you kidding me?” was the only thing he could say. Hildur and Andri went up to Marek to read over his shoulder.

“What?” Andri asked.

“Look,” Hildur answered. Andri stood on his toes to see better. In the book, there was a sort of drawing.

“Isn’t it just like...” his voice trailed off. Hildur nodded. It was a picture of eggs – the exact same eggs that they’d found in the basement. Above the image were the words: *DINOSAUR EGGS.*

Chapter 6

Dinosaur Eggs

In the history of Iceland, there have been countless significant moments. One of them was when the Viking Ingolfur Arnarson stood on the prow of his ship, saw Iceland for the first time, and thought to himself, *It'll be nice to live here. I'm sure there's never bad weather.* Another big moment took place when Jon Sigurdsson stood up in a room full of Danes and shouted, "We all protest!" in Icelandic, a language that the Danish, though they ruled the country, understood not a word of.

But the moment when a living dinosaur – the first to appear in millions of years – moved inside of its egg was, by far, the most important in all of Icelandic history.

The kids closed the door to Aevan's room, locked it, and drew the curtains. Aevan's dad tried to come in to sing them a song, but they wouldn't let him. Aevan was relieved.

The stones – six in total – were all laid out on Aevan's floor. The boys had tried to carry the box all the way from the basement to the bedroom, but Hildur demanded they let her do it alone. She didn't need to rest even once the entire trip! Aevan didn't know what she ate for breakfast, but he was sure he should ask for the recipe.

Einstein ran in a circle around the strange nest as if crazed, but stopped from time to time to sniff them.

"Wait, wait, wait," Andri said, holding an egg in both hands. "Are we sure that it's a dinosaur egg?"

Marek stroked Einstein, who was now standing in front of the pile of stones with his tail sticking straight up.

"It's just like in the picture," said Hildur, continuing to flip through the book. "And the picture is drawn from actual fossils. What do you think, Aevan?" Aevan stood over the stone pile. He didn't hear anything that the kids were saying; he was lost in his own thoughts. He imagined he was on a sort of grid, and all of his thoughts were zooming around in his head.

He was forcefully interrupted when Hildur smacked him on the back with a book and he was pulled back to the present.

“Sorry,” she said, grinning. “You weren’t answering.” Aevan blushed.

“I was just trying to figure out what they were,” he said. The kids looked at him.

“Shouldn’t we work it out together?” Marek asked.

“Yeah,” Hildur replied, turning to Aevan. “Two heads are better than one.”

Aevan looked at the others. Maybe she was right? He ran to his desk and grabbed a notebook.

“Alright,” he said. “What do we know?”

“What are you doing?” Marek asked. Einstein continued to circle the stones.

“We need to write down everything we know,” Aevan said, and started to scribble in the notebook. “So what do we know? Number one: we know that these are no regular rocks and that there’re eggs inside of them, probably dinosaur eggs.”

“Yeah, but we only have this one sketch of what dinosaur eggs look like,” said Andri. “Maybe they’re just normal rocks, or maybe the eggs are just giant chicken eggs.” He took a closer look at the egg, and shook it a little bit. “Maybe they were really, really big chickens?”

“No,” Hildur said, pointing to the egg. “It’s scaly. I don’t know about you, but I’ve never met a scaled chicken.” Andri smirked at Hildur.

“Maybe it got really, really sunburnt!” he retorted.

Aevan continued. “Number two: we know the dinosaurs died out a very long time ago.”

“Yeah, but then what’s the egg doing here?” Hildur asked. “Were dinosaurs ever in Iceland?”

Aevan shook his head. “No. Iceland was formed a long, long time after the dinosaurs died.” Marek raised his hand. Aevan smiled. “You don’t need to raise your hand, we aren’t in school.”

Marek blushed and put his hand back down. “What about this one?” he said, holding up the book he was reading. It showed a picture of the earth, and how it was broken up into tectonic plates.

“Of course!” Hildur cried and Andri was so surprised that he dropped the egg on the floor. Einstein hid under the bed and Aevan accidentally tossed his pencil out the window. He tore the book out of Marek’s hands and waved it like a flag in a parade. Andri stared at the floor where the egg had fallen, but the other kids didn’t notice because Hildur was making such a racket. “The earth’s crust! Moves!” she exclaimed. The boys stared at her, blankly. “You’re clever, Marek! The earth is made up of all sorts of plates that move around in the earth, really, really slowly. Right?” The boys nodded their heads in unison. “Which means that the earth was once completely different than it is now.”

It was like someone had flipped on a lightbulb. Aevan hurried to the desk to grab a new pencil and started to write in his notepad as fast as he could.

“Of course!” he called. “When the dinosaurs walked the earth, all of the continents were in different places than they are now, and many of the hot springs and geysers we know now didn’t even exist then. Maybe – and it’s a very big maybe – the eggs fell into the magma, traveled for millions of years with the movement of the tectonic plates, and...”

Marek grabbed on to his shoulders. “And maybe they came up out of the earth in one of the eruptions that your grandma saw?!”

Aevan clapped his hands in excitement.

Hildur continued to read. “It says here that most of the volcanoes in Iceland are inactive now, but they once formed a type of belt that ran like a zipper across Iceland, which sits on two continental plates called the North-American plate and the Eurasian plate. They moved in opposite directions and because of that the country was slowly ripped in half, the volcanoes moved closer and closer to the coast, and finally lost their connections to magma chambers in the earth. And they cooled down. Later, more volcanic formations took their place on the belt.” The book showed a picture of the two plates and how they moved.⁵

⁵ TN: Illustration here showing Iceland and movement of the tectonic plates

“But what’s in the middle of Iceland, then?” Marek said, thoughtful. Hildur turned the page.

“Nothing, I guess. Just the highlands and a lot of glaciers. No people, of course. Maybe a few tourists and some sheep. Well, and crazy people driving around in jeeps.” Aevan nodded his head, continued to write.

“Let’s say that it started out in a dinosaur nest. Maybe everything was going crazy – eruptions everywhere, floods and other natural disasters, and at exactly the same moment that the water was flooding the nest, lava was also pouring over it.” Hildur squealed in excitement. “The lava cooled on contact and created a protective shell over the eggs!” she called. “Which means that there are eggs in all of these rocks!”

“Just like Kinder eggs!” Aevan exclaimed.

Marek looked around the room. “Wasn’t there chocolate somewhere?” he asked, starting to search.

Aevan continued to write. “Number three: lava formed a protective shell over the eggs.”

“Ugh, guys...” Andri said quietly. His tone brought the chatter to a halt. “It fell.”

They stared at Andri.

“What fell?”

“The egg. When Hildur shouted. It fell on the floor.”

Aevan, Hildur and Marek hurried over to Andri, who was staring down at the egg in front of his feet.

“Oh no. Is it broken?” Aevan asked. Andri carefully picked it up off the floor.

“I don’t think so,” he whispered. “Sorry.”

“You have to be more careful,” Aevan said. “That egg hasn’t come in contact with air in millions of years. It’s been in a protective shell. We don’t know what could happen. Even the heat from your hands could be enough to cause it to hatch; imagine breaking it on the floor.”

“Chill, man. I’ll be more careful.” Andri, annoyed, turned the egg in his hands. “I’m just checking to make sure that it’s okay.” He pouted, speaking in a soft voice to the egg, as if it were a baby. “I’m just checking to see that you’re okay, little teensy, tiny diney...” He stopped

mid-sentence. His eyes doubled in size. Then he said the eight words that would change their lives forever:

1. "There
2. is
3. something
4. moving
5. inside
6. of
7. the
8. egg."

Chapter 7

How to Hatch a Dinosaur

First, the kids had to figure out if the rocks contained eggs. In light of the circumstances, the most obvious course of action seemed to be to crack the stones like egg shells, by striking them with an instrument of some sort, like a spoon. Aevan snuck down to the kitchen to find the best tool for the job, but the normal spoons were just too small. Andri wanted to use a cast-iron pan, but Aevan was convinced that it would be too cumbersome to lug around. Instead, they used a big, heavy wooden spoon.

“Whenever you’re ready,” Hildur whispered as Aevan took aim with the spoon. Andri was still holding on to his dinosaur egg, keeping close watch of it. Whatever was inside of it had been making a good bit of noise for the better part of an hour. Marek had found a chocolate bar somewhere and was munching on it with a look of satisfaction while Einstein sat in the corner, purring and watching the scene with curiosity – and caution – from a distance. Aevan lined up his spoon with his target and brought it down on the rock egg in a swift movement.

CRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAACCKKKK...

It broke clean in two. Out rolled another egg – scaly and pale.

“Wow...” Hildur said, picking it up. Aevan handed Marek the spoon.

“Do you want to try?” he asked. Marek nodded his head excitedly and chose a rock from the pile.

In less than half an hour, they’d broken all of the rocks. Inside each and every one of them was an egg. Five were the same size, but one was bigger than the others, and one was slightly smaller. The kids examined the eggs as precisely as they could, but they didn’t show any signs of life.

“We could...” Aevan mumbled to himself, and looked in a circle. He got to his feet and turned up the radiator in his room.

“What are you doing?” Marek asked. “Isn’t it already warm enough?” Aevan turned the knob on the radiator just a little more before heading back to the group.

“Maybe the heat from Andri’s hands made the egg stir. I was turning up the heat so that everything would be warmer. Then maybe these eggs will come to life.” Aevan laid his duvet on the floor and they arranged the eggs on it; Hildur flipped through another book. On its cover was a picture of an enormous dinosaur. After a little while, the room was sweltering.

“Here it says that dinosaurs are the forefathers of modern birds. Do you believe that?”

Aevan shrugged his shoulders.

“That’s one theory,” he said, feeling the sweat roll down his cheek. “Some dinosaurs say that scientists had feathers.” The others stared at him, puzzled. “No, I mean: some scientists say that dinosaurs had feathers.” He eyed the others, who were wilting from the heat. He was, personally, so hot that he was starting to feel confused.

“Should we go back downstairs? Before we pass out from the heat?” Marek smiled. They crept out of the room one after another and quietly closed the door.

Seven giant dinosaur eggs and one very curious cat were left behind in the dark room.

Aevan’s mouth was full of cake when he suddenly heard a strange sound from upstairs. Andri and Hildur were in the throes of an argument about a programme on TV and Marek was making himself hot chocolate. They heard the noise again, and a loud thump. Aevan looked at the others.

“Is your room right above us?” Andri asked. Aevan nodded his head, his cheeks still full of birthday cake. Andri looked up. “What do you think is going on up there?” He’d hardly finished his sentence before another, even louder, thump resounded. And then, a shriek.

The kids tossed aside their plates, glasses and cakes, and darted from the table as fast as they could!

When Aevan tore open the bedroom door, he didn’t know what to expect. He’d never in his wildest dreams thought that he’d see Einstein in the middle of the duvet, surrounded by tiny dinosaurs that were snapping at him. They were trying to eat him!

Andri shouted, Hildur was truly speechless and Marek spouted off so many questions at once that it was impossible to discern one from another. Aevan sprang toward them, dead

set on stopping these dinosaurs (which were in reality so small that they should have been called *dwarfosaurs*) – but as he neared the blanket, he noticed that all was not as it seemed. The dinosaurs weren't trying to eat the cat; they were just trying to cuddle him. Einstein was very pleased with the attention; he picked the dinosaurs up with his paws, waved them around, nuzzled them and jostled them. It seemed like he was in the ball pit at IKEA, he was having so much fun.

"This. Is. Incredible!" both Andri and Marek whispered (but of course there was a question mark at the end of Marek's exclamation). "Those are dinosaurs! You've got to be kidding me! Dinosaurs!" The kids crept carefully into the room. The dinos didn't pay them any mind. They were too busy playing with each other, and the cat. Hildur crouched next to the duvet and had a look at them.

"Here, kitty, kitty," she whispered, "come here, kitty."

The cat tried to walk over to her, but he didn't get far before the dinosaurs lined up one by one and chased after him. He gave up and plunked himself back down on the duvet. The dinosaurs were exceptionally pleased and immediately started to nuzzle him again.

Hildur laughed. "Look at that! They followed him," she said. Einstein purred. But after a little while, he felt he'd gotten enough attention. Hildur peered at the dinosaurs. She saw immediately that they weren't all the same species.

"I see three different kinds. What do you guys think?" Hildur looked at the boys. "This one is..." She grabbed the dinosaur book off the floor and flipped through the pages. "Look here, this one, with the long neck, that's nibbling at Einstein's tail – that's brachiosaurus. It says here that it's an herbivore. Ahh, he's going to get huge." She ran her eyes over the group. "There's only one like it."

Marek pointed to another dinosaur. "Is that tyrannosaurus rex?" he asked. Hildur flipped the pages and nodded her head. "Don't they eat..." Marek went silent for a second. "Don't they eat meat? And don't they also get huge?" Hildur nodded. Marek looked at the squirming dinosaurs. "There's only one of those, right?" he asked, breathing a little easier when the others nodded.

“One brachiosaurus. One T-rex.” Andri counted them. “But look at these five. They’re all the same. They’re not brachiosaurus or T-rex. What kind are they?” He pointed to the five dinosaurs that were standing in a group, apart from the others. As soon as he pointed them out, they stopped playing, turned and stared at Andri with cold eyes. He startled, and felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand straight up. Hildur continued to search the book to figure out exactly what type of species they were, but she didn’t need to.

“I know what kind of dinosaur they are,” Aevan said, quietly. “Those are raptors. Velociraptors.” The kids stared at him. “They are extremely dangerous. They’re bigger than a grown man. They’re incredibly clever. Smart. And they have sharp teeth and long claws.” He looked at the group. “And we’ve got five of them.”

“Shouldn’t we tell somebody about all this?” Marek asked. They looked at one another.

“Do we have to?” Aevan smirked. Hildur smiled back, so did Andri.

“Great,” he said, turning to Aevan and raising his open palm. “Gimme five. This is the best birthday party that I’ve ever been to!”

That evening, Aevan fell asleep to the cooing of seven dinosaurs, and the purr of one cat. Einstein refused to leave the dinosaurs. Aevan had tried to shoo him out of the room so that he could get something to eat and maybe go into his own bed, but Einstein went a little haywire and yowled outside of the door until Aevan let him back in. Now he was at the centre of a pile of dinosaurs, purring loudly and evenly.

That was one good day, Aevan thought to himself as he closed his eyes. And I don’t need to tell anybody about the dinosaurs, right? He let out a yawn. I mean, what’s the worst that could happen? And then he fell asleep.

* So, so much.

Chapter 8

Dinosaurs = Giant Lizards!

Taking care of a pet is harder than it looks. If you've ever had a goldfish, you know that even though it hangs around in the same place and doesn't make a lot of fuss,* it's still quite a lot of work. Now imagine that you own a dinosaur – or seven!

But Aevan didn't have to take care of them alone. For the first time in his life, he had friends to help him. All of a sudden, he didn't have to sit by himself at lunch. He had someone to play with during recess. And every day after school, Hildur, Marek and Andri came over to his house to visit the dinosaurs – and their father. The dinosaurs all lived in Aevan's little bedroom, and he tried his best to hide them from his mum and dad. He locked his door when he left for school and told them that they weren't allowed, under any circumstances, to go in. He said that the strange sounds they heard were just a videogame that he and the kids were playing, and he explained away the emptied-out freezer by saying that Hildur, Andri and Marek were always incredibly hungry. And after a little while, it seemed like a dream had come true. Aevan's mum and dad didn't suspect a thing, and the dinosaurs lived happily in his room.

But the kids learned, sooner rather than later, that the dinosaurs – those enormous reptiles – were, in fact, enormous. They grew alarmingly quickly! And the bigger they got, the harder it was to hide them. Plus, the T-rex had decided to teethe on Aevan's pillows while he was in school, and because of that, he started waking up with bits of cotton between his toes. Then the raptors started to spend more and more time looking out the window. He had even seen one of them claw at the panes of glass, as if to test their strength. That didn't bode well.

Finally, Aevan saw that he had to tell his parents about the dinosaurs because if they found out on their own, then they'd force him to get rid of them.

Aevan got ready to tell them. He asked the others to help him to cook a delicious meal in the microwave oven** and tuned the radio to a station that played the kings of rock: Eric

* Mainly because it's very hard to talk with your mouth full of water. Try it next time you go swimming.

** Dried pasta with sauce from the jar

Clapton, David Bowie and Gunnar Thordarsson. When his parents arrived, he pulled out their chairs, set out all of the food and said, "I kind of need to tell you something."

Aevar's parents looked at one another, puzzled.

"Yes?" his mum asked.

"So," Aevar started, trying to sound as grown up as he possibly could. "You know how I've always wanted a pet?"

His mum and dad nodded.

"Yes. That's why we got you Einstein," his dad said finally, which made Aevar feel a bit guilty. He'd seen very little of Einstein lately. The cat passed all of his days with the dinosaurs, and after a little while, Aevar had nearly forgotten that he already owned a pet.

"Yes, well. But..." It wasn't going well. He had hardly started to talk and already he was getting tongue-tied. He looked at his parents, who smiled back at him, and decided that maybe it was best not to beat around the bush.

Aevar took a deep breath and said, matter-of-factly, "There are seven dinosaurs in my room."

His dad stared at him. His mother opened her mouth as if to speak, but decided against it. Aevar had never before seen them speechless. His dad opened and closed his mouth. His mother's lips stayed pursed. Neither of them said a word.

Aevar decided to just keep talking, since his first attempt had been so successful. He took a deep breath and spoke, as fast as he could, so that his parents couldn't possibly misunderstand.

(Try to take the deepest breath you can and see if you can say what Aevar said in one go.)

"The rocks that I found down in the cellar on my birthday were actually lava-coated dinosaur eggs and we broke the rocks open and turned the heater on the highest setting and they hatched and now there are dinosaurs up in my bedroom and at least two of them are going to become gigantic and there's no room for them any more in my room, I'm sorry that I didn't tell you right away, but I can't keep them in my room any longer and the T-rex is a huge

pain in the butt because he keeps trying to eat my bed because the cotton in it works just like floss or something like that and he's always got something in his mouth and we need to find some way to deal with it, but still he's a good dinosaur and please forgive me, I should have told you about this a long time ago but please, please forgive me and don't make me get rid of them, please, please."

For a moment, silence took over the house.

"So..." his mum started. His dad cleared his throat. "It's healthy to have an active imagination" – his dad shook his head as his mum went on – "but I don't understand why..."

"AAAARRRRRRGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

She didn't finish. A terrible roar suddenly resounded throughout the house. The floor shook and pictures fell off the walls. Aevan's parents looked at one another.

"That's T-rex," Aevan said apologetically. "I told you that he was a pain. But still good, very good."