

Grades 2-3

Story

Gannett, Ruth Stiles. *My Father's Dragon*. Illustrated by Ruth Chrisman Gannett. New York: Random House, 1948. (1948) From Chapter Ten "My Father Finds the Dragon."

When my father was crossing the back of the fifteenth crocodile with two more lollipops to go, the noise of the monkeys suddenly stopped, and he could hear a much bigger noise getting louder every second. Then he could hear seven furious tigers and one raging rhinoceros and two seething lions and one ranting gorilla along with countless screeching monkeys, led by two extremely irate wild boars, all yelling, "It's a trick! It's a trick! There's an invasion and it must be after our dragon. Kill it! Kill it!" The whole crowd stampeded down to the bank.

As my father was fixing the seventeenth lollipop for the last crocodile he heard a wild boar scream, "Look, it came this way! It's over there now, see! The crocodiles made a bridge for it," and just as my father leapt onto the other bank one of the wild boars jumped onto the back of the first crocodile. My father didn't have a moment to spare.

By now the dragon realized that my father was coming to rescue him. He ran out of the bushes and jumped up and down yelling, "Here I am! I'm right here! Can you see me? Hurry, the boar is coming over on the crocodiles, too. They're all coming over! Oh, please hurry, hurry!" The noise was simply terrific.

My father ran up to the dragon, and took out his very sharp jackknife. "Steady, old boy, steady. We'll make it. Just stand still," he told the dragon as he began to saw through the big rope.

By this time both boars, all seven tigers, the two lions, the rhinoceros, and the gorilla, along with the countless screeching monkeys, were all on their way across the crocodiles and there was still a lot of rope to cut through.

"Oh, hurry," the dragon kept saying, and my father again told him to stand still.

"If I don't think I can make it," said my father, "we'll fly over to the other side of the river and I can finish cutting the rope there."

Suddenly the screaming grew louder and madder and my father thought the animals must have crossed the river. He looked around, and saw something which surprised and delighted him. Partly because he had finished his lollipop, and partly because, as I told you before, crocodiles are very moody and not the least bit dependable and are always looking for something to eat, the first crocodile had turned away from the bank and started swimming down the river. The second crocodile hadn't finished yet, so he followed right after the first, still sucking his lollipop. All the rest did the same thing, one right after the other, until they were all swimming away in a line. The two wild boars, the seven tigers, the rhinoceros, the two lions, the gorilla, along with the countless screeching monkeys, were all riding down the middle of the river on the train of crocodiles sucking pink lollipops, and all yelling and screaming and getting their feet wet.

My father and the dragon laughed themselves weak because it was such a silly sight. As soon as they had recovered, my father finished cutting the rope and the dragon raced around in circles and tried to turn a somersault. He was the most excited baby dragon that ever lived. My father was in a hurry to fly away, and when the dragon finally calmed down a bit my father climbed up onto his back.

"All aboard!" said the dragon. "Where shall we go?"

"We'll spend the night on the beach, and tomorrow we'll start on the long journey home. So, it's off to the shores of Tangerina!" shouted my father as the dragon soared above the dark jungle and the muddy river and all the animals bellowing at them and all the crocodiles licking pink lollipops and grinning wide grins. After all, what did the crocodiles care about a way to cross the river, and what a fine feast they were carrying on their backs!

As my father and the dragon passed over the Ocean Rocks they heard a tiny excited voice scream, "Bum cack! Bum cack! We need our nagon! I mean, we need our dragon!"

But my father and the dragon knew that nothing in the world would ever make them go back to Wild Island.

Grades 2-3

Informational Text

Kudlinski, Kathleen V. *Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs*. Illustrated by S. D. Schindler. New York: Dutton, 2005. (2005)

Long, long ago, before people knew anything about dinosaurs, giant bones were found in China. Wise men who saw the bones tried to guess what sort of enormous animal they could have come from.

After they studied the fossil bones, the ancient Chinese decided that they came from dragons. They thought these dragons must have been magic dragons to be so large. And they believed that dragons could still be alive.

Boy, were they wrong!

No one knows exactly what dinosaurs looked like. All that is left of them are fossil bones and a few other clues. Now that we think that many of our own past guesses about dinosaurs were just as wrong as those of ancient China.

Some of our mistakes were little ones. When the first fossil bones of *Iguanodon* were found, one was shaped like a rhino's horn. Scientists guessed that the strange horn fit like a spike on *Iguanodon's* nose

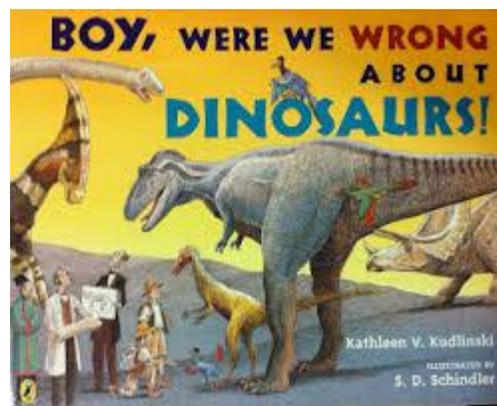
Boy, were we wrong about *Iguanodon*!

When a full set of fossil bones was found later, there were two pointed bones, they were part of *Iguanodon's* hands, not its nose!

Other new clues show us that we may have been wrong about every kind of dinosaur.

Some of our first drawings of dinosaurs showed them with their elbows and knees pointing out to the side, like a lizard's. With legs like that, big dinosaurs could only waddle clumsily on all fours or float underwater.

Now we know that their legs were straight under them, like a horse's. Dinosaurs were not clumsy. The sizes and shapes of their leg bones seem to show that some were as fast and graceful as deer.



Poetry

Hughes, Langston. "Grandpa's Stories." *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. New York: Knopf, 1994. (1958)

The pictures on the television
Do not make me dream as well
As the stories without pictures
Grandpa knows how to tell.

Even if he does not know
What makes a Spaceman go,
Grandpa says back in his time
Hamburgers only cost a dime,
Ice cream cones a nickel,
And a penny for a pickle.