

Kay's not so ordinary Saturday

It seemed to be an ordinary Saturday. The sun was shining, the birds were singing and the flowers were all in bloom in the cottage garden.

Kay's parents had moved early in the summer to their new home by the sea. They had had enough, they said, of the rat race in the city and wanted something more peaceful. Kay did not know what they had meant by 'rat race', for he had seen a rat only once when lived in the city. But he had become excited when his Mum and Dad had told him that they would be living in a town on the Jurassic Coast. He had been learning about dinosaurs at school.

"Another fine day," thought Kay to himself.

He liked to get up early on bright summer mornings. He could not understand why his parents got up late at the weekend.

"They miss the best part of the day," he thought. "It's all so peaceful. I wonder what we'll be doing after breakfast. Fossil hunting again, I expect. The ones I found last Saturday were all right, I suppose. But I'm tired of ammonites; they are not very exciting. Perhaps I'll find a Tyrannosaurus rex today."

He looked up. The gulls were screeching over the sea. As he looked, one of the gulls seemed to be bigger than the others. It was flying towards the cottage.

"It's the wrong shape for a gull," thought Kay.

Indeed, it was the wrong shape. As it got closer, Kay saw that it was a Pterodactylus antiquus. It landed on the lawn in front of him.

"Hello," said Kay. "What are you doing here? I thought you were supposed to be extinct."

Kay like the word 'extinct'; it was a new word he had learnt in school last term. He felt grown up using it.

"I am," replied the pterodactyl.

"But ..." began Kay, who was not at all surprised to hear the pterodactyl speaking.

"But," interrupted the pterodactyl, "it's Midsummer's Day today; it's a magical day when time gets warped. I've flown through to your time."

"Oh," said Kay who understood 'magical' but did not know what the pterodactyl meant by time getting warped. But he did not care.

"I suppose," continued Kay, "that you once lived here on the Jurassic Coast."

"I lived in the Jurassic time," replied the pterodactyl, "but not exactly here. Where your town is now was *under* the sea then; that's why you have been finding so many ammonites."

"Oh," said Kay again. "I would like to have seen it when you weren't extinct."

"I'm only extinct in your time," said the pterodactyl. "But time is warped today, remember. Jump onto my back and hold on tight. We'll fly through the time-warp back to where I'm alive."

"But that's a long time ago, isn't it?" asked Kay. "It will be million of years before I'm born, so how can I be alive there?"

"Look," said the pterodactyl, "I've been extinct for about 150 million years. But I'm alive talking to you, aren't I?"

"Yes, you are," agreed Kay. "So I suppose if you are alive now in my time, I can be alive in your time even if it is before I have been born."

"That's right," said the pterodactyl. "I told you: time is warped on Midsummer's Day. Now, hop on!"

So without more ado, Kay hopped onto the pterodactyl's back and held

tight. With a flapping of its wings, the pterodactyl suddenly took off and went soaring up into the air.

"Wowie!" cried Kay in excitement.

He looked about; there was no sign of the cottage nor, indeed, of the town. The coast had disappeared and he saw the sea beneath him. The pterodactyl flew low and Kay was excited to see ammonites.

"Wow," he exclaimed, "I didn't know they had tentacles. And look at their eyes!"

He was fascinated too by the fish he saw and even more so whenever the pterodactyl scooped one up in its beak. Then suddenly Kay cried out: "That looks like a large crocodile. Has it swum through a time warp on Midsummer's Day?"

The pterodactyl laughed. "No," it said, "that's a true Jurassic croc. Those critters have been around for a very long time."

"Oh," replied Kay. "I didn't know that. Our teacher only told us about dinosaurs and pterodactyls."

"I'm glad we weren't overlooked," muttered the pterodactyl.

Suddenly the pterodactyl rose from from the sea and Kay caught sight of a huge creature swimming below.

"Yikes!" exclaimed Kay. "That's some creature, that is! I'm glad *they* have become extinct!"

"That," replied the pterodactyl, "is a pliosaur. That one I guess is about 16 metres long; they are not nice to meet. "

"Can't we see some dinosaurs?" asked Kay. "Could you fly over land and look, please, Mr Pterodactyl?"

"Since you ask so nicely," replied the pterodactyl, "I'll take you. The shape of the lands are *very different* from those in your world. But hold on, here we go."

They zoomed high up into the air again and eventually found land and came down in a clearing among a lot of what looked like fir trees, monkey puzzle trees and strange looking ferns.

"Where are the flowers?" asked Kay as he looked around.

"There aren't any," said the pterodactyl. "They haven't evolved yet. But look over there."

"Wow," exclaimed Kay, as he caught sight of a herd of grazing diplodocuses.

"I know what those are," he added. "they're diplodocuses. Our teacher told us about them. But they're so huge. I'm glad they're vegetarians."

"They're certainly huge," agreed the pterodactyl. "They make that pliosaur look a midget."

Kay laughed. Then he looked worried as he caught sight of another dinosaur in the distance.

"What's that?" he asked. "Is it a T. rex?"

"No," laughed the pterodactyl. "It's only an allosaurus - a mere eight and half metres long."

"Long enough," shuddered Kay. "I hope it's not interested in us. Is it going to attack the diplodocuses?"

"No," said the pterodactyl. "The diplodocuses are far too large; they could easily see off an allosaurus. If you look carefully, you'll see two other allosauruses hanging around. They're trailing that herd of diplodocuses, looking for a weak one or for a chance to make off with a young one."

"Ugh," went Kay, "let's get out of here."

"OK," said the pterodactyl. "Jump aboard."

So Kay jumped onto the pterodactyl again and off they flew.

"Please, Mr Pterodactyl," said Kay, "I'd like to see a T. rex - from a safe distance of course - I really would."

"All right," said the pterodactyl. "But you'll not see one here in the Jurassic world. We'll have to go forward several million years through another time warp into the late Cretaceous world. Hold on very tight."

They soared high up into the air and came back into a very different world. Kay saw some trees that reminded him of the Jurassic world, but there were other trees with what Kay called 'normal' leaves and he he could see flowers.

"This is better," said Kay. "I like the Cretaceous world. Can we land?"

"It would not be a good idea," said the pterodactyl. "See that group of hadrosauruses by the lake over there?"

"Oh yes," said Kay, "the duck-billed dinosaurs. Our teacher told us about them; they do look funny."

Just then he saw them become agitated and they started to scatter as a huge beast came charging at speed towards them.

"Yikes!" exclaimed Kay. "what a size - and those massive rear legs - and those jaws! Wow!"

"Yes," said the pterodactyl. "Some critter that is - more than twelve metres long. It makes that allosaurus look small."

As the Tyrannosaurus rex sank its massive jaws into a hadrosaurus, Kay thought the Cretaceous world was perhaps not so nice after all. Maybe it was time to get back home.

"I think I ought to be getting home, Mr Pterodactyl," said Kay. "My parents will wonder where I am."

"Yes," said the pterodactyl, "I'll take you back. But your parents won't know that you've gone. Don't forget time gets warped on Midsummer's Day."

So once again they soared high into the air and Kay saw them coming down onto the lawn of his cottage. He thanked the pterodactyl and went off into the kitchen. It was still empty. Just then his parents appeared in their dressing gowns. They looked very sleepy.

"Hello, Kay," said Dad, reaching for the cornflakes. "Up early again?"

"Yes," said Kay. "It's surprising what you see in the garden if you get up early - especially on Midsummer's Day."

"Is it?" said his Mum as she brewed the coffee. "It looks just like an ordinary Saturday to me."

"An ordinary Saturday suits me just fine," said Dad, as he poured milk onto his cornflakes, "the more ordinary, the better."

"Yes," said Mum as she got the Jura Krunchies for Kay. "We'll have a leisurely breakfast and then we can go to the beach again."

"And," added Dad. "Kay can do more fossil hunting."

"Good," said Kay. "but I hope I find something bigger than ammonites."

They all laughed; but it turned out *not* to be a normal Saturday for any of the family - not after Kay found what the experts said was the fossil of a Pterodactylus antiquus.