



I recognised the supersonic scream immediately. It was unmistakably Lolli-sized. I leaped up and saw her standing on the train, arms grabbing for the book she'd been looking at. Another child had it clutched to her chest with an equally determined scowl on her face. A lady with a flowery skirt stood between them, trying to make peace.

'Now then, my little peaches, why don't we have a story all together?'

I looked around for Mum and saw her coming out of the store cupboard with her arms full of books. I could see she was thinking the same as me. A story wasn't going to work with Lolli at this point. And I couldn't say I blamed her. After all, the girl had obviously snatched the book away from her in the first place.

I sprinted down there. The flowery lady was insisting on story time and was just about to take a seat, squashing her flowery bottom

into the far-too-small-for-it train. Lolli's next scream smashed the sound barrier. And I suddenly saw why. In among the cuddly toys I spotted a scaly head with two little horns peeking out. The woman was just about to flatten poor Flicker!



In a heroic moment – or maybe it was just the reflexes of an angry and alarmed two-year-old – Lolli bent over and rammed the lady off the train like a stampeding baby rhino.

There was a screech from the lady as she tumbled forward, and then a crash as the shelf she staggered into went flying. Books scattered across the carpet and the air filled with the cries of Mum and Mrs Olive as they descended on the book corner to rescue her.

While the adults stumbled around trying to help the woman to her feet, I saw Lolli point at the picture book. As I watched, it rose up into the air and started to fly across the library, banging into shelves and ceiling lights as Flicker, whose wings were making the open pages flap noisily, struggled to find the exit.





The little girl who had grabbed the book stood there watching, her mouth forming a little round 'O' as she tried to make sense of the flip-flop-flapping book above her. And when Lolli pointed a grubby finger at her, she backed away as if she feared she might be next to fly across the room.

Finally Flicker headed straight for the open door. I dashed after the flying book and was just in time to see it smack straight into Liam Sawston's head.

He staggered on the steps and dropped his bike, nursing the lump that was already bulging on his forehead. His eyes shot to the book, which had fallen to the floor. I bet poor Flicker was just as stunned.

'You threw that at my head. I'm gonna get you for that!'

'I didn't,' I stammered. 'Honest.'

I could see Liam's anger growing. I wouldn't have been surprised if his T-shirt had split open and shown green muscles rippling underneath. It was definitely an Incredible Hulk moment. And as he hulked up, I seemed to shrink even smaller than usual.

He reached forward to grab the book, presumably to fling it back at me. I glanced down and noticed it wasn't moving. What if Flicker was hurt? Either way, I couldn't let Liam find him. I shut my eyes and imagined myself turning red hot, like an ember, like a spark about to explode.

And I did what Lolli had done. I became a rhino and charged. The trouble is, with my eyes shut my manoeuvre was less successful than Lolli's. Liam just sidestepped and I ended up tripping over his bike and crashing head first into a shrub. Luckily for me, he had sidestepped into something squelchy and he landed in an equally undignified heap.

'Whatever's going on?' Mrs Olive cried, striding towards us.

She bent down, her hand reaching for the book. My arm shot out. 'Wait,' I cried.

It was too late. She lifted it up as I sat there with leaves and ladybirds in my hair, powerless to stop her.

But Flicker was nowhere to be seen! I think the sigh of relief that came out of me was probably worthy of a hurricane rating. Definitely enough to knock someone's hat off anyway.

'I hope you haven't been throwing my books around,' Mrs Olive continued. If there was one thing that would turn sweet Mrs O into your worst nightmare it was mistreating books. This was something Liam had been known to do so her attention was focused

directly on him. Unfair I know, but I wasn't about to start feeling sorry for him.

Liam glared at me, scraping what I realised must be dragon poo off his trainer, then grabbed his bike and staggered away down the street. As he passed under one of the trees he yelped and his hand shot to his head. I could just make out a little flitting shape among the leaves. I grinned. It looked like Flicker had dropped a final parting gift on him. The icing on the cake, you might say.