

Monday mornings involve a lot of running, arm-waving, shrieking and crying – it's one of the days Mum works at the vets', and the only day Dad doesn't work from home – so getting me to school, Lolli to nursery and them to work can be a bit of a challenge. For them anyway. I usually just kick about in my room, avoiding all of the above until it's time for breakfast.

But that was before Flicker. On my first school day since the baby dragon had arrived, I was more panicked than Mum and Dad combined.

My first job was poo patrol. I'd already learned the best way to deal with Flicker's poos was with a pair of oven gloves and a water pistol. Just in case any had dried out to the point of detonation. Then I used one of Lolli's little plastic spades from last year's holiday at the beach to shovel them up and drop them down the toilet. Quick

wash of the spade in the sink and the worst job was done.



The next thing was emptying out my toy box and lining it with some fresh paper and my old dressing gown. I was planning on leaving Flicker my cheese plant and a bowl of water. On that first night I'd been so caught up in the whole 'I have a dragon' hysteria I'd forgotten he'd need to drink. It was only when I'd gone to the loo and turned round to see him about to nose-dive into the toilet that I figured that one out. Luckily I caught him just in time. The last thing I wanted was him thinking that was the water bowl!

By the time I left for school I was pretty sure Flicker had everything he'd need to spend the day on his own in my room. But by the time I got to school I had a nagging feeling I had forgotten something. As I was racking my brains, Ted, Kat and Kai raced over.

'Hey, Tomas. Did you know humans share fifty per cent of their DNA with bananas?' Ted said.

I didn't.

'And they're herbs too, you know.'



‘Humans?’

‘Bananas! They’re herbs, not fruit.’

I hadn’t known that either. But then I wasn’t sure anyone other than Ted knew this stuff. His head was full of it.

I’ve known Ted since we were goldfish. I mean, not actual goldfish, but the size of them. When our mums found out they were pregnant they went to this class where you find out what to do with babies – I’ve no idea what they learned, but it had something to do with llamas, I think. That’s where they met, and so that’s when Ted and I first met – although being squished inside our mums meant our first play dates were a bit limited. We were even due to arrive on the same day – which would have been pretty cool really as we’d have the same birthday – but Ted went and barged his way out early, so he had a full two weeks with no best mate, which kind of serves him right.

Kat and Kai we met on our first day at school. They’re twins. Like me and Lolli, they genuinely seem to like each other. It doesn’t stop them arguing, mind you, but if push comes to shove, if you mess with one, expect the other to come wading in for them.

So there’s the four of us – and it’s been like that since forever.

‘You OK, Tomas?’ Kat asked. ‘Where’d you get all those scratches?’

I rubbed my arm. Until Flicker had got the hang of his tail, every time he batted it

about, the arrowhead end had gouged into my skin.

‘Er ... Tomtom,’ I said hurriedly.

‘What about that?’ she asked, pointing at my hand.

I fiddled with the plaster. It was just a mild burn from my first poo patrol – before the oven glove.

‘Er ...’

I’m rubbish at lying. I panic and then my overactive imagination gets involved. For some reason right then, Nana’s tortoise, Jacko, popped into my head. Only he was a ninja tortoise with a jetpack. I was just about to blurt out that I’d been attacked by a torpedo tortoise when luckily I was saved by Mr Peters ringing the bell.

I lunged for the door, just managing to get in front of Liam ‘I-rule-the-universe’ Sawston.

‘Oi!’ he wailed. ‘Sir, Tomas just elbowed me.’

I’d actually brushed his arm with the tip of my littlest finger, but Liam’s not one to bother with details.

Without hanging about to see if ‘sir’ was going to call me back, I ducked inside and made for our classroom.

