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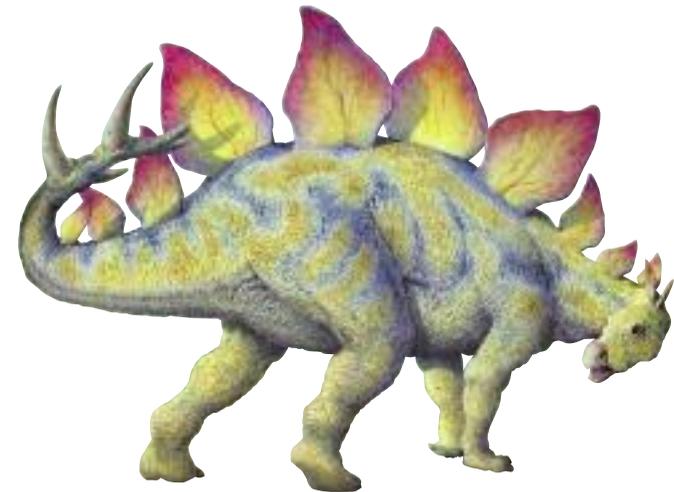
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see how we lived

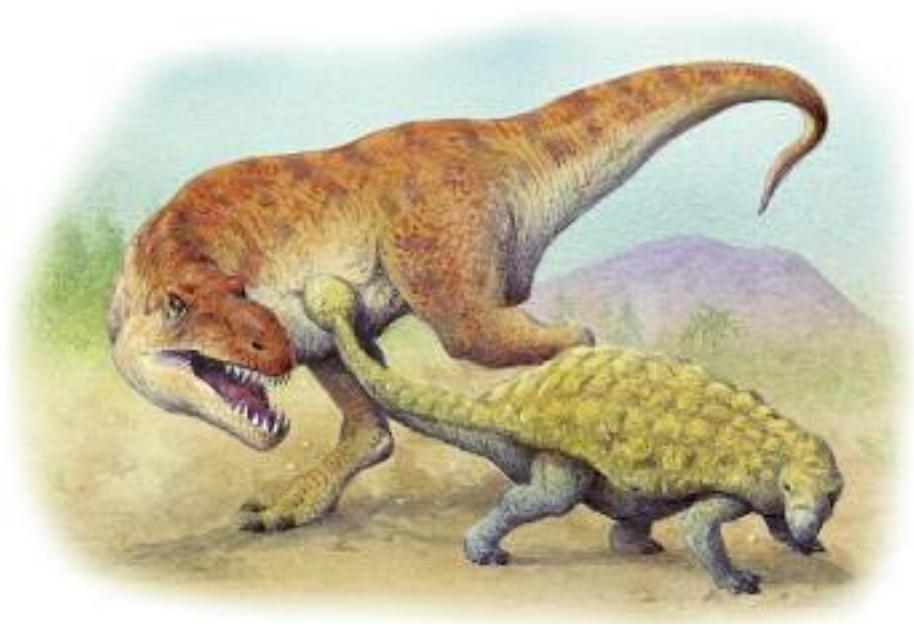
Plant-eating Dinosaurs



 Orpheus

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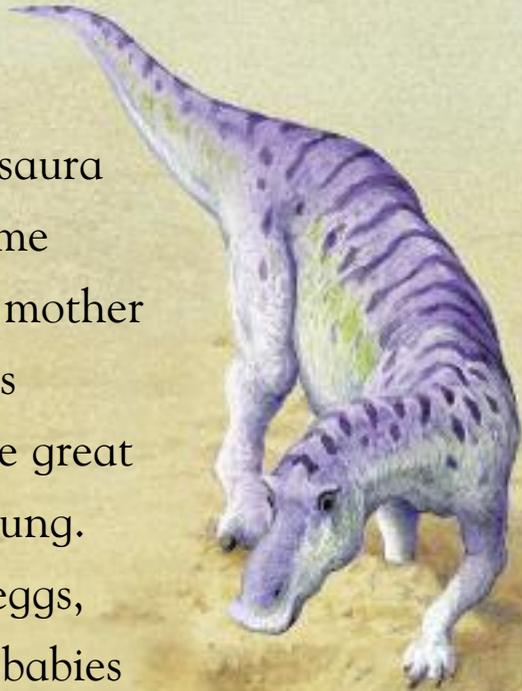


The plant-eaters

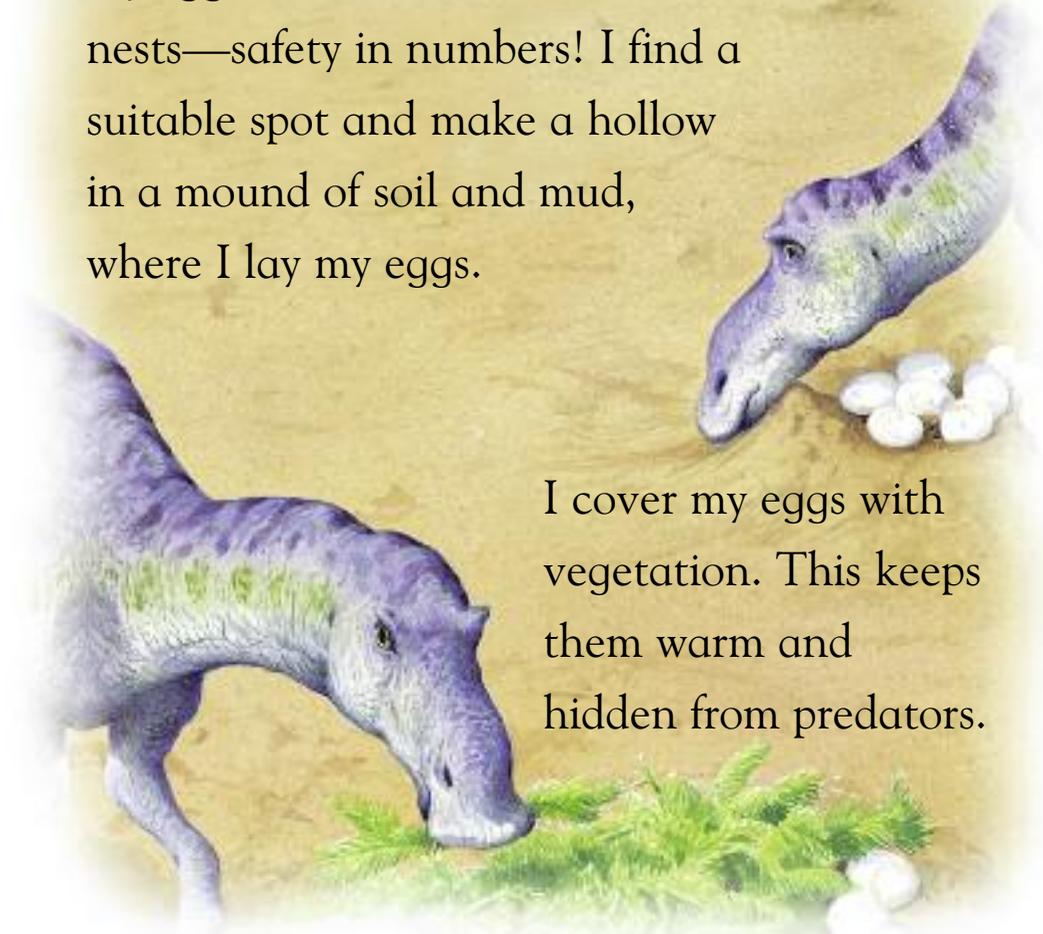
Some of us plant-eating dinosaurs are the largest creatures that ever walked on the Earth. But we still have to find food, raise our young and fend off attackers like most other animals. We come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Some of us have spikes, horns or body armour. You can read all about us in this book.

How did dinosaurs raise their young?

I am a Maiasaura and my name means “good mother lizard”. This is because I take great care of my young. I protect my eggs, and once my babies hatch out, I look after them well.



Firstly, I need to find a safe nesting site. The best place for my eggs is near other Maiasaura nests—safety in numbers! I find a suitable spot and make a hollow in a mound of soil and mud, where I lay my eggs.



I cover my eggs with vegetation. This keeps them warm and hidden from predators.

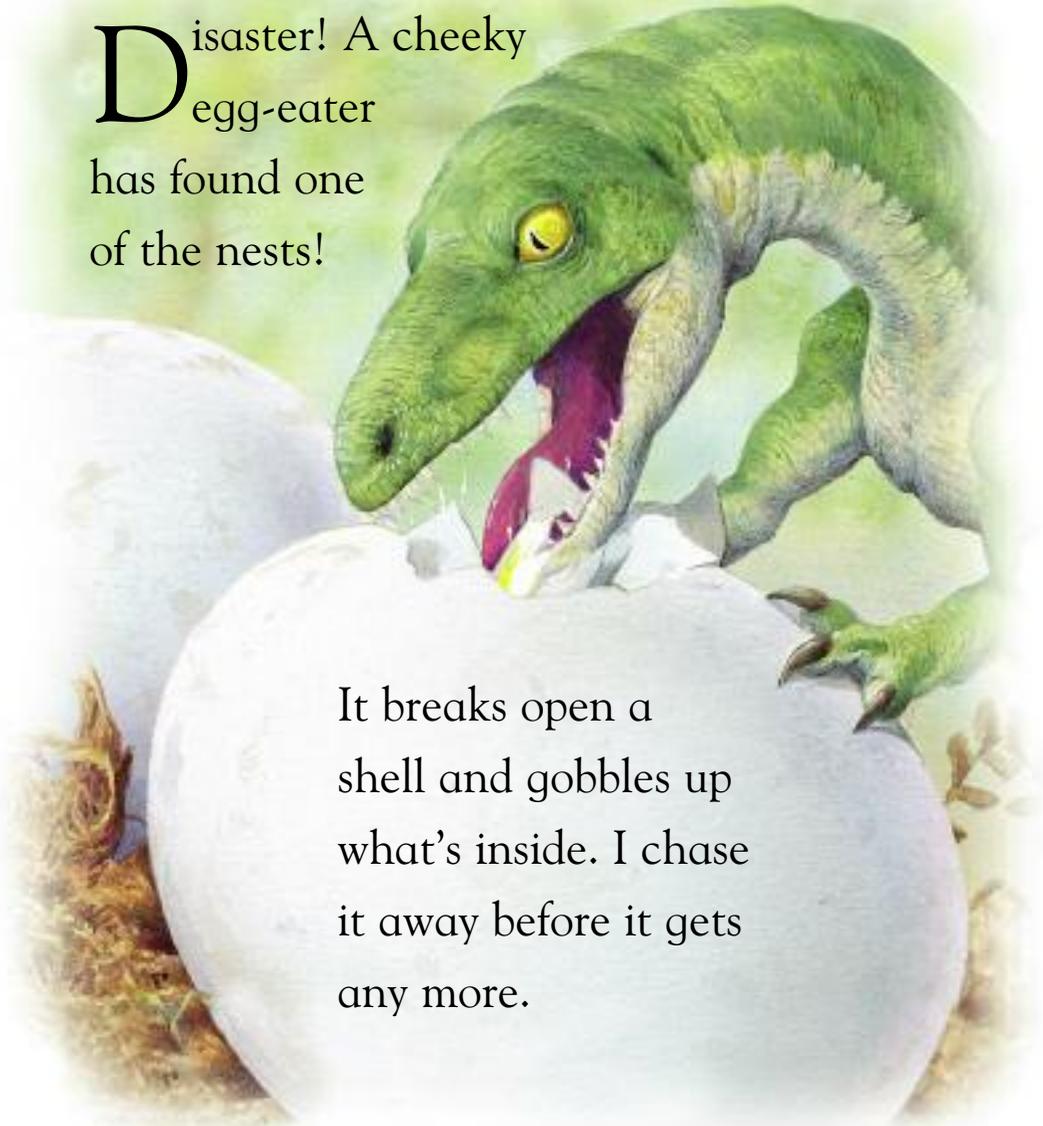


These are my eggs. Each is about the size of a small melon, and is covered in a hard shell. I laid more than 20 this year. We mothers keep a close eye on the nests. We are anxious to protect our eggs from being stolen by egg-eating dinosaurs.

Here is one of my babies inside its shell.

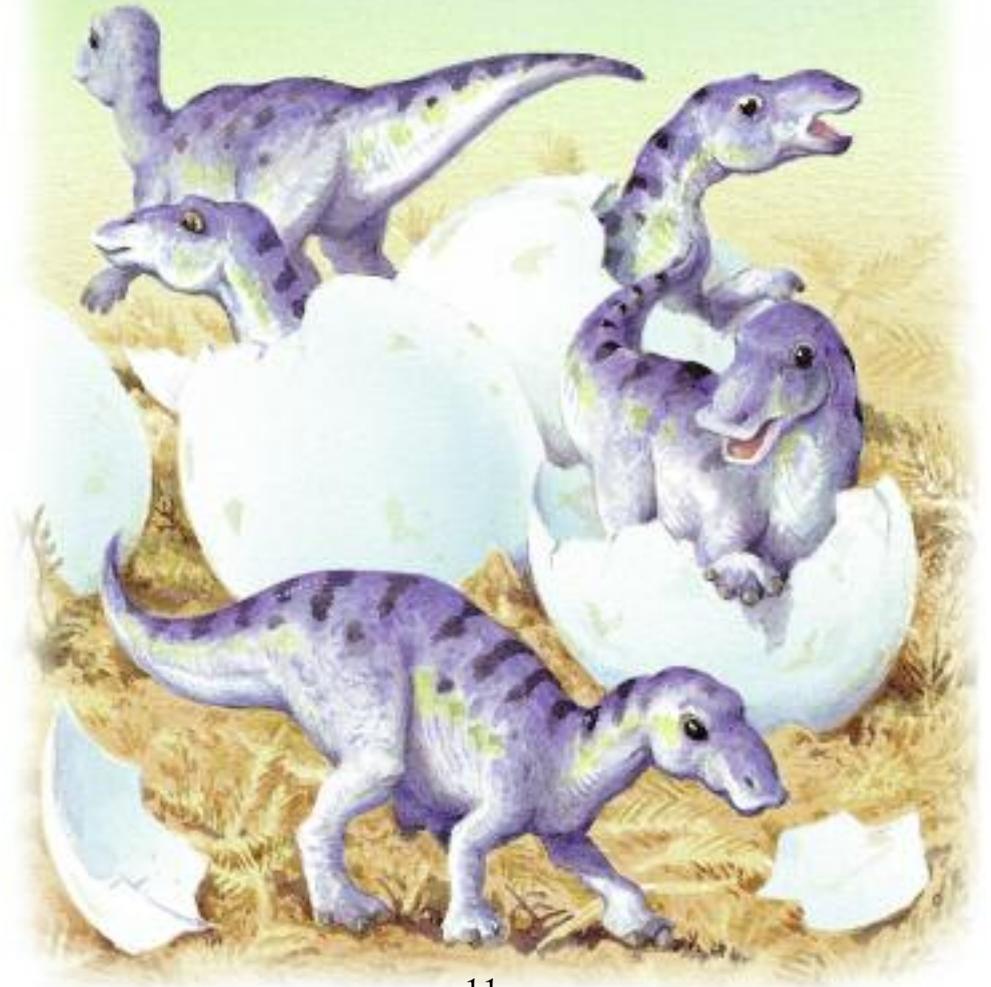


Disaster! A cheeky
egg-eater
has found one
of the nests!



It breaks open a
shell and gobbles up
what's inside. I chase
it away before it gets
any more.

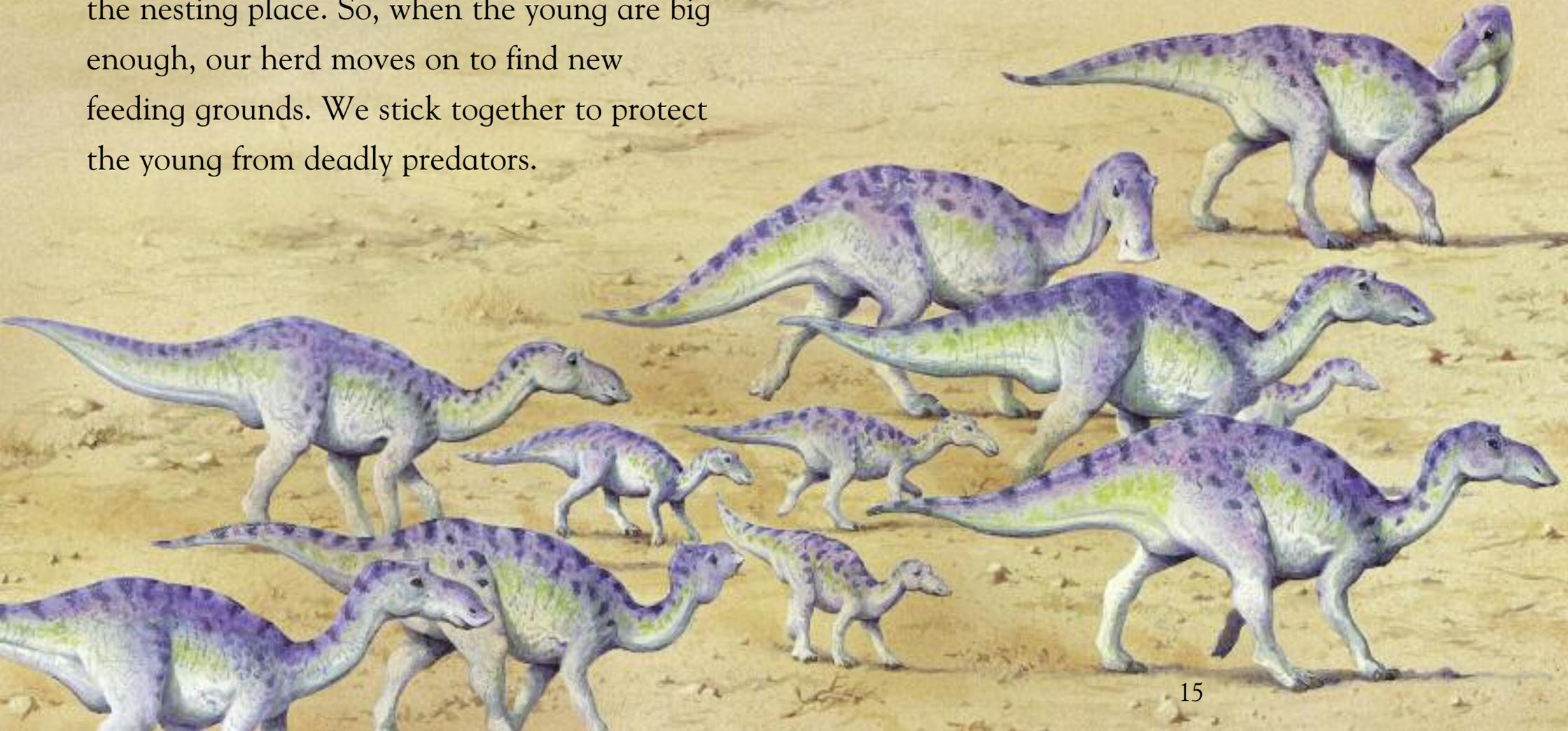
My babies can walk as soon as they hatch
out. They are “duck-billed”, just like me.





I know that my babies will be hungry as soon as they hatch out. I feed them with delicious green fern shoots. They pull the fronds from my mouth. I will collect food for them until they are a few months old and a about a metre long. Then they can start finding food for themselves.

We all have big appetites. As our babies grow and eat more, food runs out quickly in the nesting place. So, when the young are big enough, our herd moves on to find new feeding grounds. We stick together to protect the young from deadly predators.

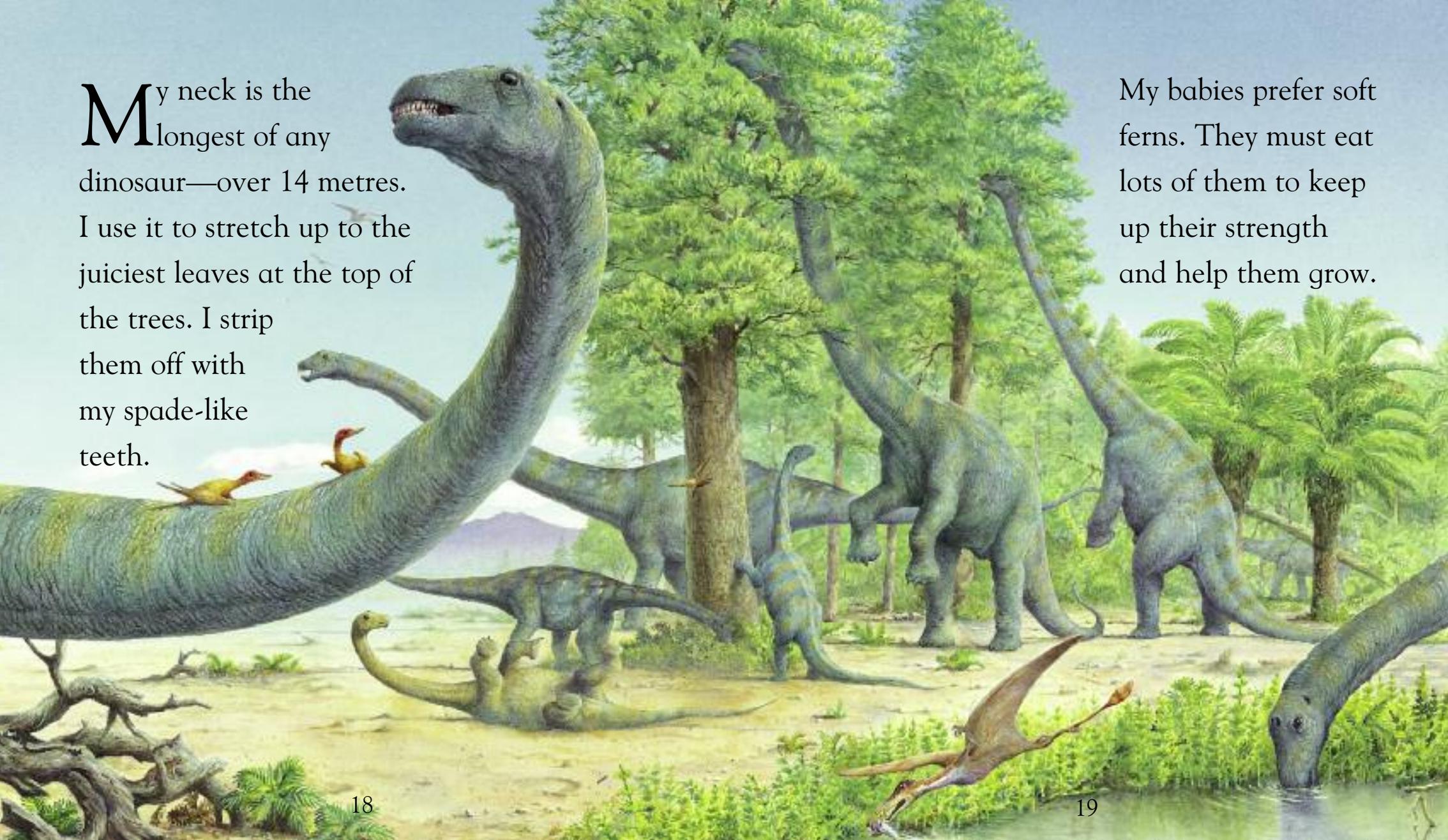


How did dinosaurs digest their food?

Dinosaurs like me, a giant Mamenchisaurus, need to eat massive amounts of plants and leaves just to stay alive. To help me digest all this, I swallow stones into a part of my stomach called the gizzard. These help to grind the tough leaves into a pulp. The pulp is much easier for my huge stomach to digest.

My neck is the longest of any dinosaur—over 14 metres. I use it to stretch up to the juiciest leaves at the top of the trees. I strip them off with my spade-like teeth.

My babies prefer soft ferns. They must eat lots of them to keep up their strength and help them grow.



How did dinosaurs defend themselves?

I am a peaceful Iguanodon, but when a predator like this Acrocanthosaurus attacks, he had better watch out! Check out this secret weapon of mine: a huge thumb-spike. I'm no pushover ...



Big bullies like this Allosaurus should think twice before trying to eat me! I may be a slow plant-eater, but we Stegosauruses can still put up quite a fight.

One flick of my powerful, spiny tail can do a lot of damage. My pointy plates and tough, studded hide are a good last line of defence.



Take that, Tarbosaurus! The club at the end of my tail is a powerful weapon. Talaruruses like me also have body armour which protects us from a predator's sharp teeth and claws.



I am a Styracosaurus, and this sharp horn on my nose can do serious damage. My head frill is covered in spines so I am also protected if a predator goes for the back of my neck.

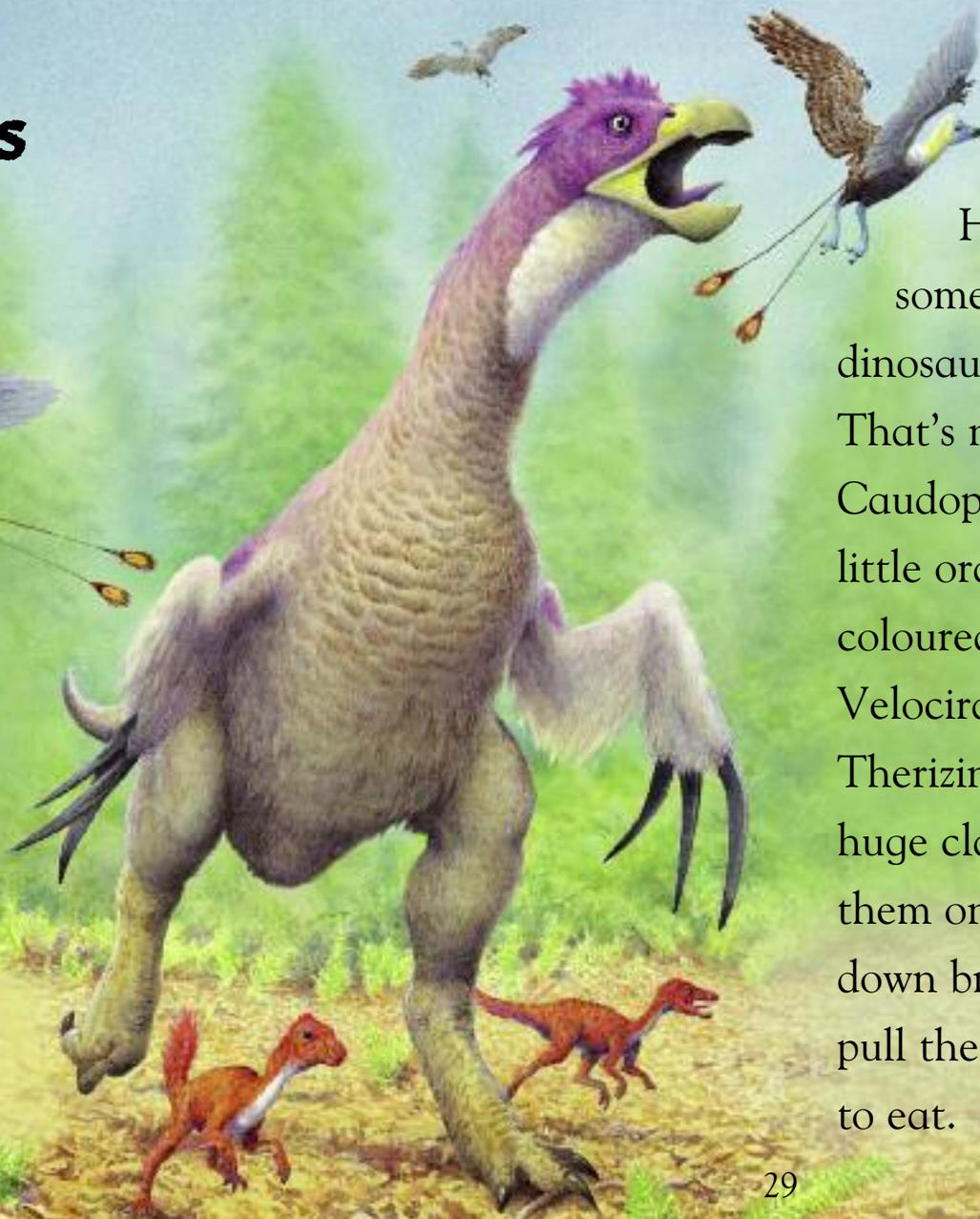
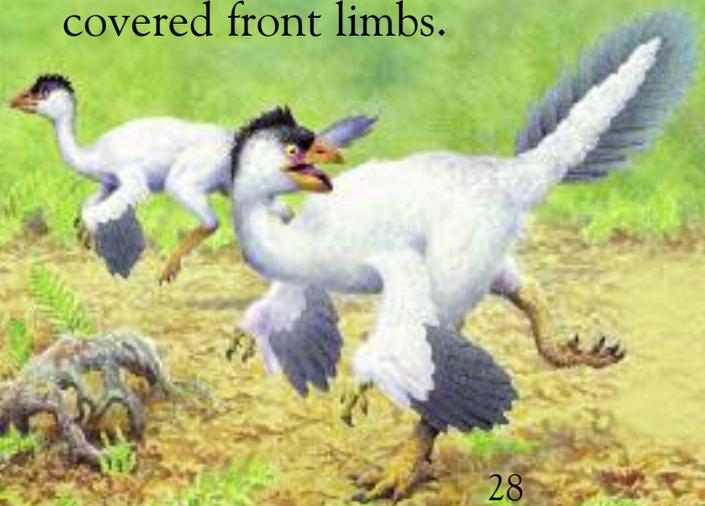
Some plant-eaters don't have spikes, horns or clubs to fight off predators. We Mamenchisauruses, for example, rely on our sheer size instead.

If we were attacked, we could rear up on our back legs and crash down on our foe. A good whipping by our tails would hurt a bit, too!



Did some dinosaurs have feathers?

It's true: some of us have feathers instead of scales. Did you know that birds are descended from dinosaurs? Their wings are really feather-covered front limbs.



Here are some feathery dinosaurs and birds. That's me in white, Caudopteryx. The little orange-coloured hunter is Velociraptor. Big Therizinosaurus has huge claws but uses them only to drag down branches and pull the leaves off to eat.

