

It all began one wet day... Granddad suggested that my brother Josh and I look for some interesting books to read in his study. He had hundreds! Some of them were really ancient.



While we were looking, a very strange thing happened. A book fell out of the bookcase all by itself. It was an old book about searching for dinosaur fossils. A page had come loose in the fall. On it was a photo of something that really sparked our interest: an enormous, curved claw, a metre long. Scary!

A MYSTERIOUS CLAW

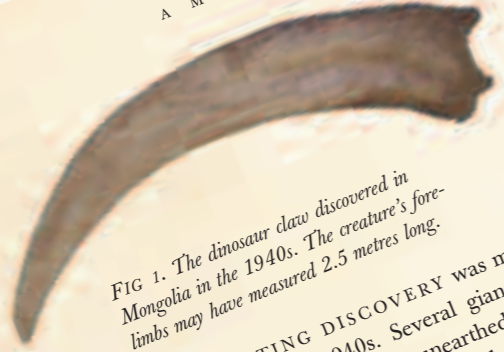


FIG 1. The dinosaur claw discovered in Mongolia in the 1940s. The creature's forelimbs may have measured 2.5 metres long.

VERY FASCINATING DISCOVERY was made in Mongolia in the late 1940s. Several giant claws, each about one metre in length, were unearthed. At first, scientists were of the opinion that they belonged to a giant prehistoric turtle. During further expeditions in the 1950s, however, other fossils, including a tooth and certain parts of limbs, were discovered, enabling palaeontologists to determine that they were in fact the remains of a previously unidentified dinosaur. No skull has yet been found, but scientists suggested that the creature may have belonged to the theropod sub-order, that it had a bipedal gait, and that it may even have borne feathers. The claws, three on each hand, may have been used to attack other dinosaurs, but it is now thought more probable that the creature was a herbivore and lived in the manner of a gorilla, using its claws to pull down foliage off the trees.

No one had ever seen such a huge claw before. The dinosaur it belonged to must have been absolutely MASSIVE—perhaps twice as big as T. rex! As we were reading, we could feel a slight draft coming from the space on the shelf left by the book. At the back of the bookcase there was what looked like a small



door. We took some more books off the shelf. There it was, complete with a key in the lock. Josh and I looked at each other. Of course, I couldn't resist the temptation... I turned the key and pushed open the door—

very slowly. It was too dark to see anything at first. The air was cool and damp. Before I could stop myself, I had climbed through. I was standing in a cave. I could hear Josh shouting "Maisie!" Then he climbed through after me. The door clicked shut behind us, but Josh had the key in his hand. We crept towards the cave entrance ...



Not long! We trekked up through the mountains in search of our cave. But the pack of dromaeosaurs must have picked up our scent. We had reached the ledge outside the cave when, to our horror, we saw them bounding up the mountainside towards us. Quick-thinking Josh reached into his rucksack and found a lighter. "Fire—that will scare them off!"

They were only a few metres away, hissing and spitting. We could see the scary, curved claws on their feet. Josh set the branch alight and he thrust the flaming torch in their faces. They'd certainly never had THAT happen to them before!

