

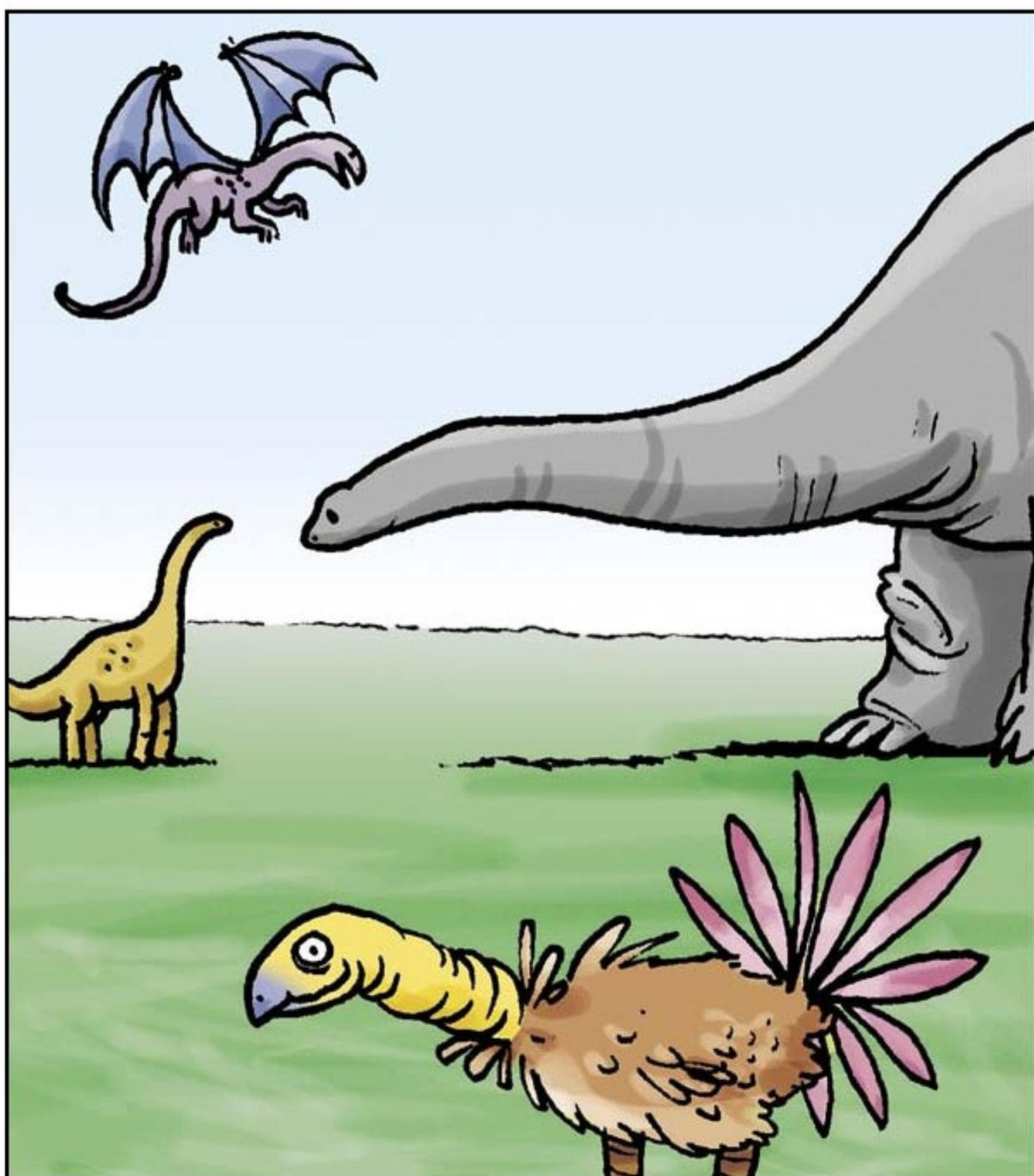
LEVELED Book • R

The Thesaurus



Written by Julie Harding
Illustrated by Chris Harding

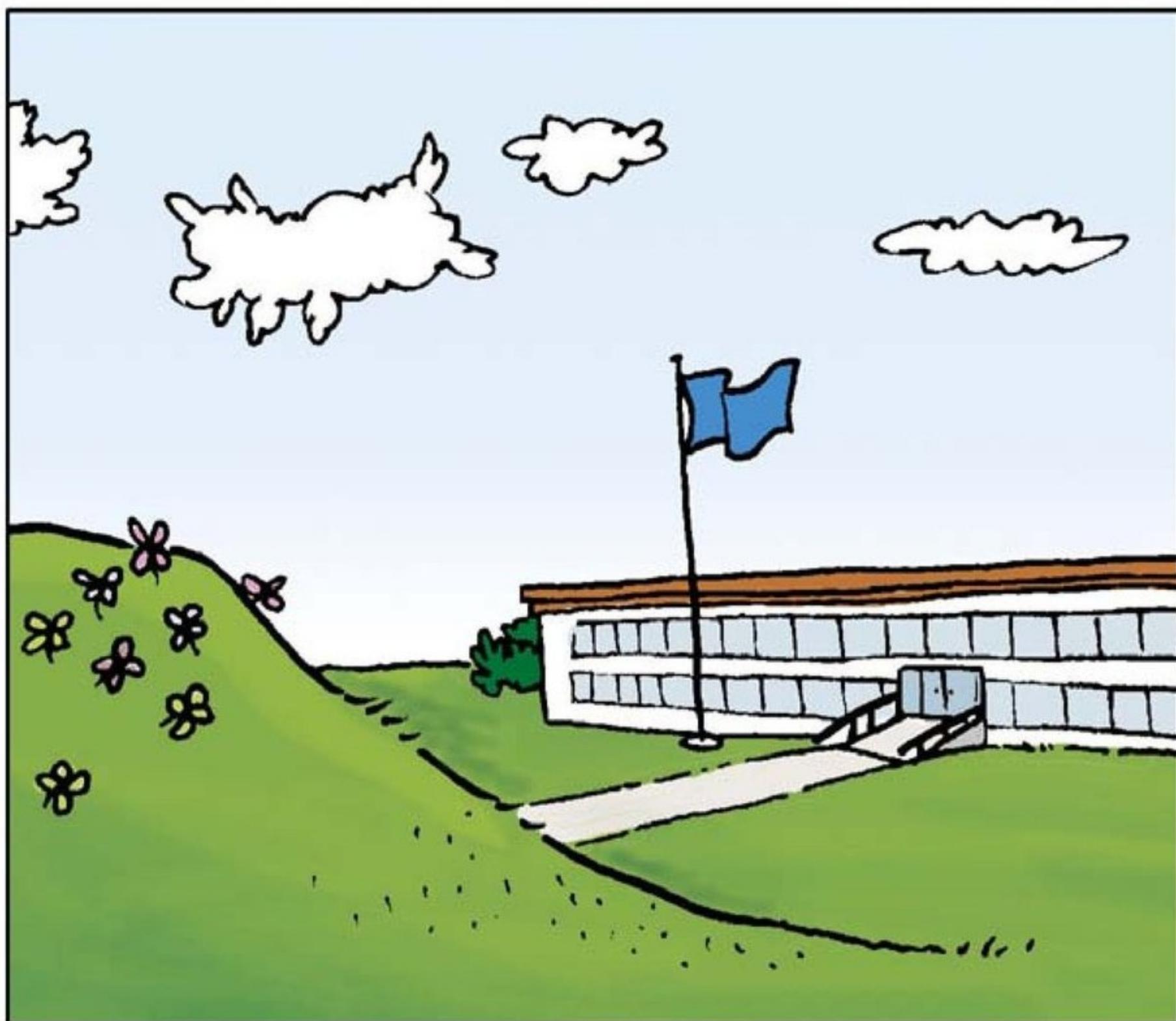
The Thesaurus



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Mrs. Ellis stood in her blue polka-dot skirt lecturing the class about antonyms. Antonyms and synonyms. *How about M&Ms?* Angie Jarrett thought and giggled inside. It was going to be a while before anyone could run out to the open field that surrounded Munger Elementary. Luckily, Angie sat pretty close to the window. She could almost feel the fresh air.



It looked like the day had warmed since lunch. Angie knew that the breeze would smell nice from the morning's rain. She also knew that this was the best time to dive into the clover patch on the other side of the playground's only hill. That was where Angie went when she wanted to write about things or just spend time with her imagination. Tiny gold-nosed puppies and great winged buffalo were known to play in the clouds above the hill. No one knew about their games except Angie.

She was watching the leaves on a tree just outside the window as they tickled each other in the breeze when Mrs. Ellis interrupted.

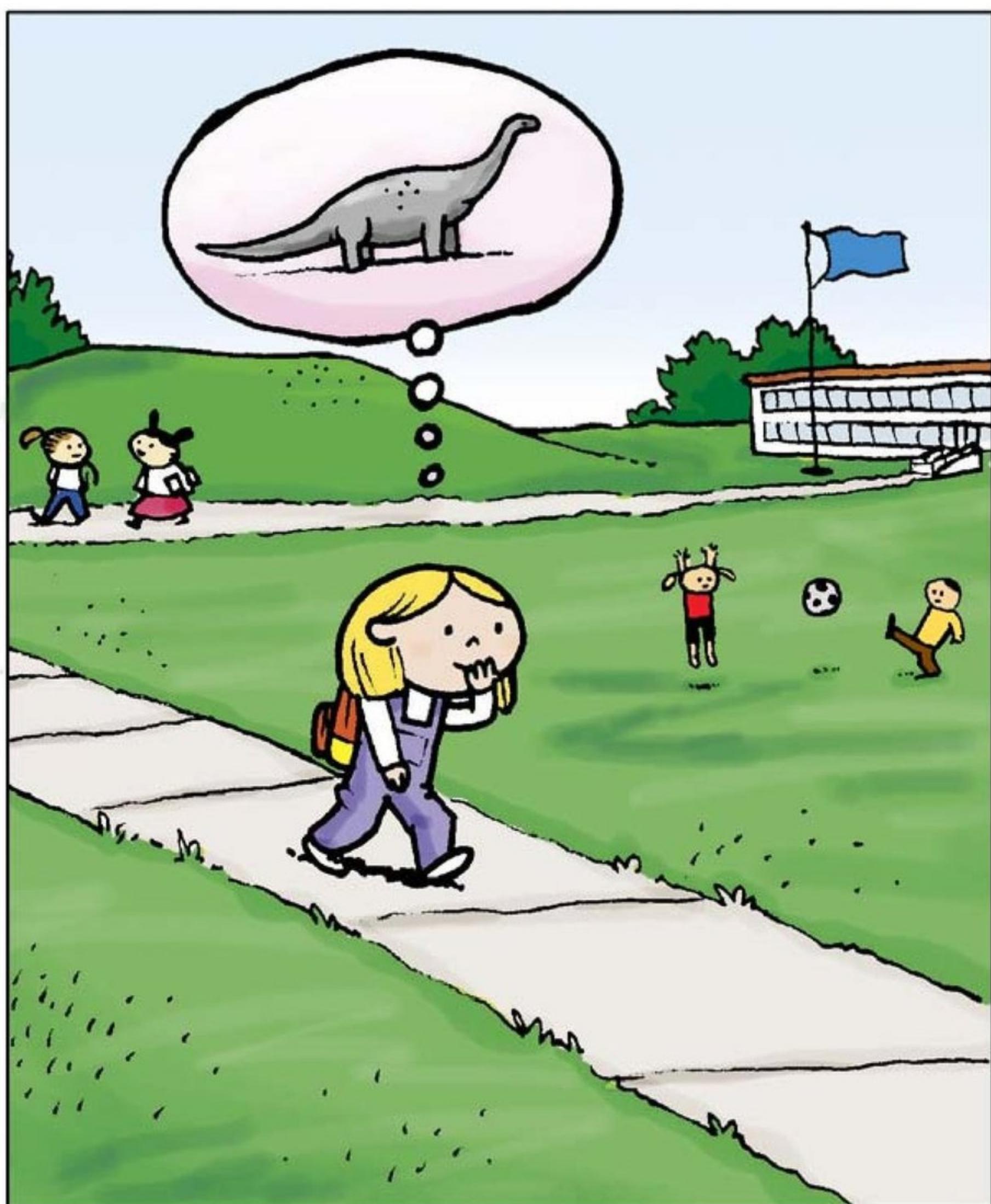
"Angie, did you hear me? All of you need to bring a thesaurus to use in class on Friday. If you don't have one at home, you can borrow one from me if you let me know before Thursday. You will each need one for the class. No exceptions, Ms. Jarrett."



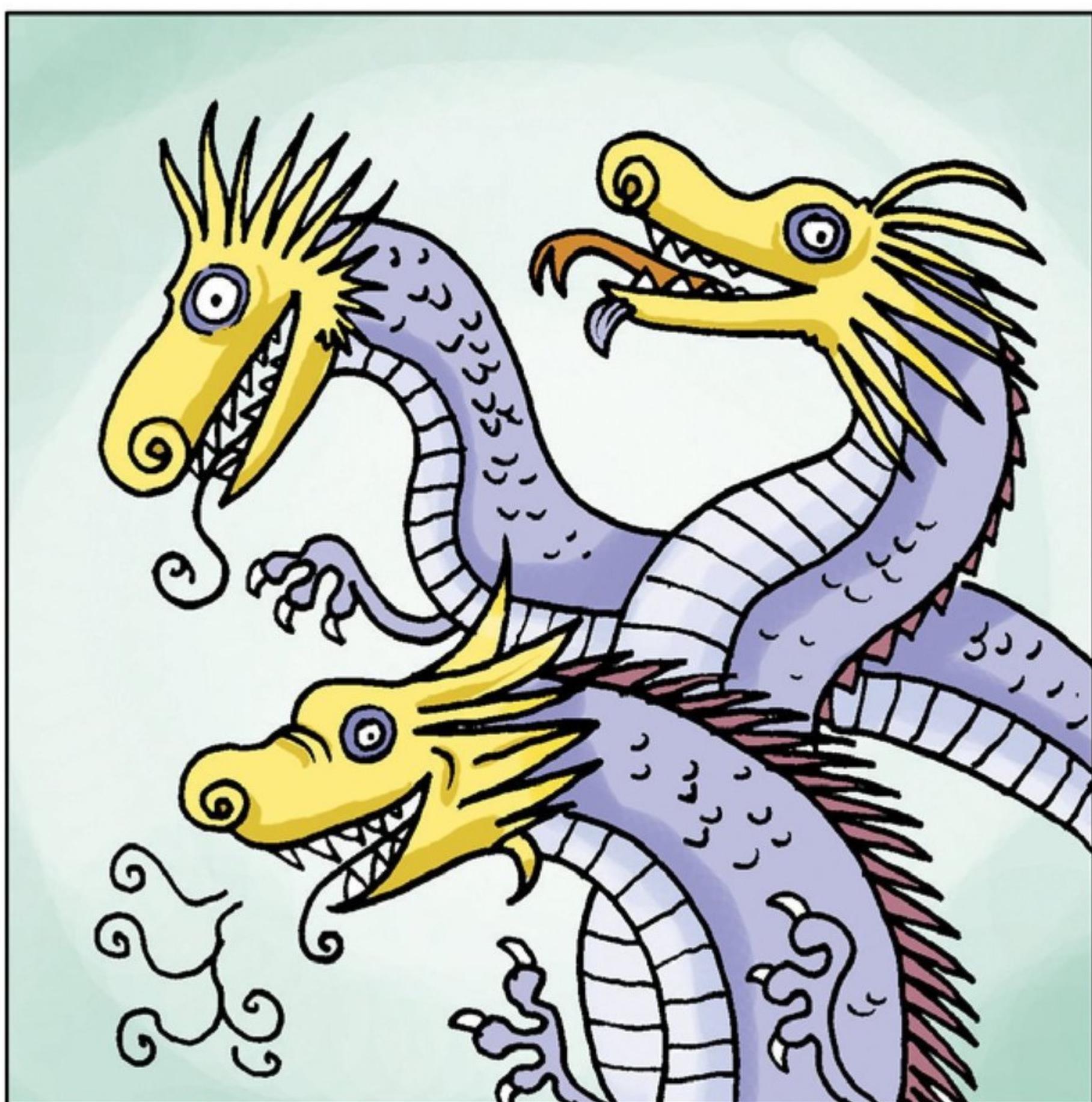


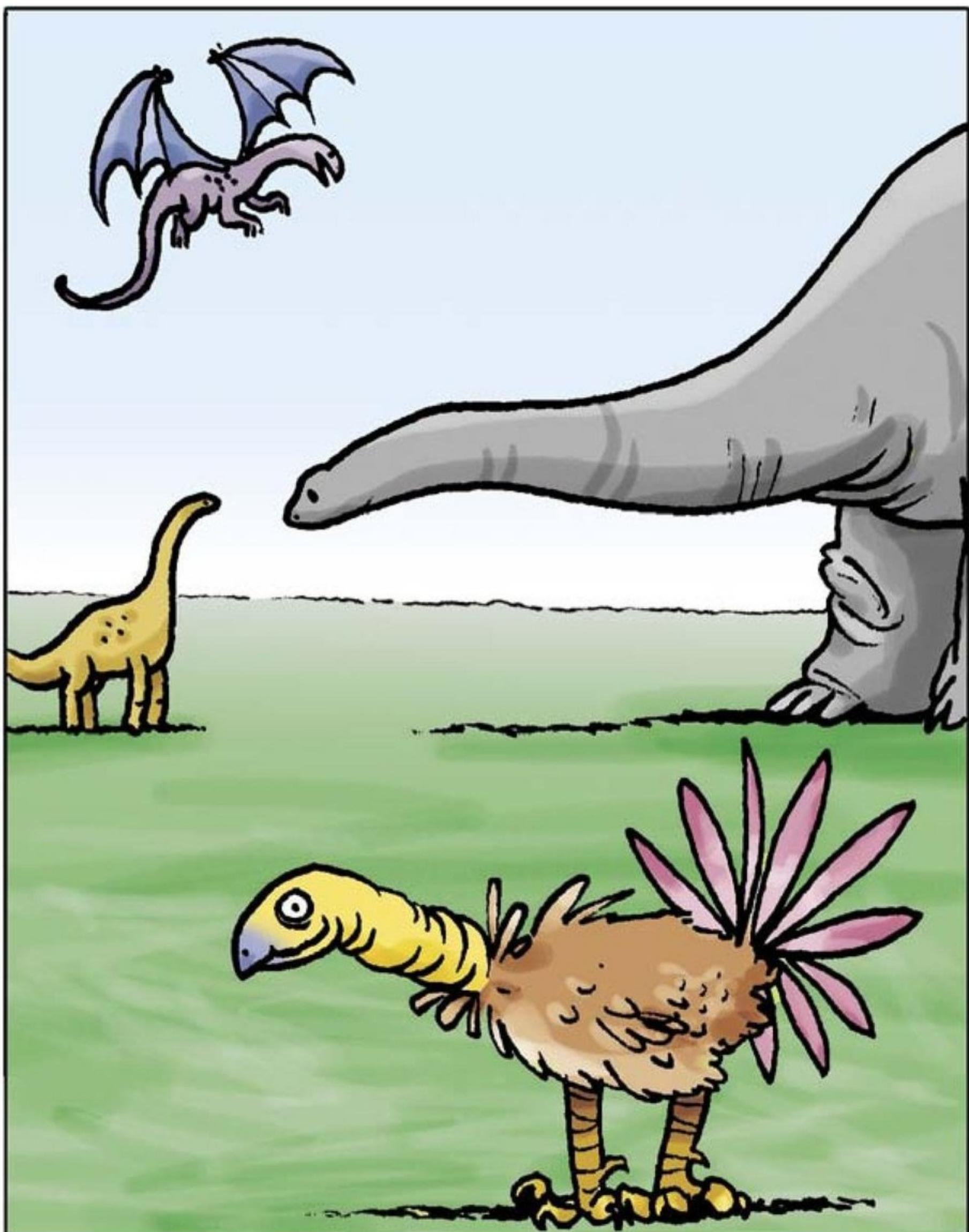
The bell rang before Angie could reply. She might have been about to defend herself, but instead, she was reeling with what Mrs. Ellis had just said. She'd been fascinated with the hulking creatures that had roamed the Earth all those long years before. Her stomach began to tighten and excitedly she flew out the door, leaving her jacket behind to spend yet another night on the back of her yellow chair.

The day was indeed warm, but Angie would not have noticed if it had been below freezing. She was busy, trying to understand how she had missed the existence of a living, breathing dinosaur. Let alone one that, according to Mrs. Ellis, might be living in the homes of every student in the class.



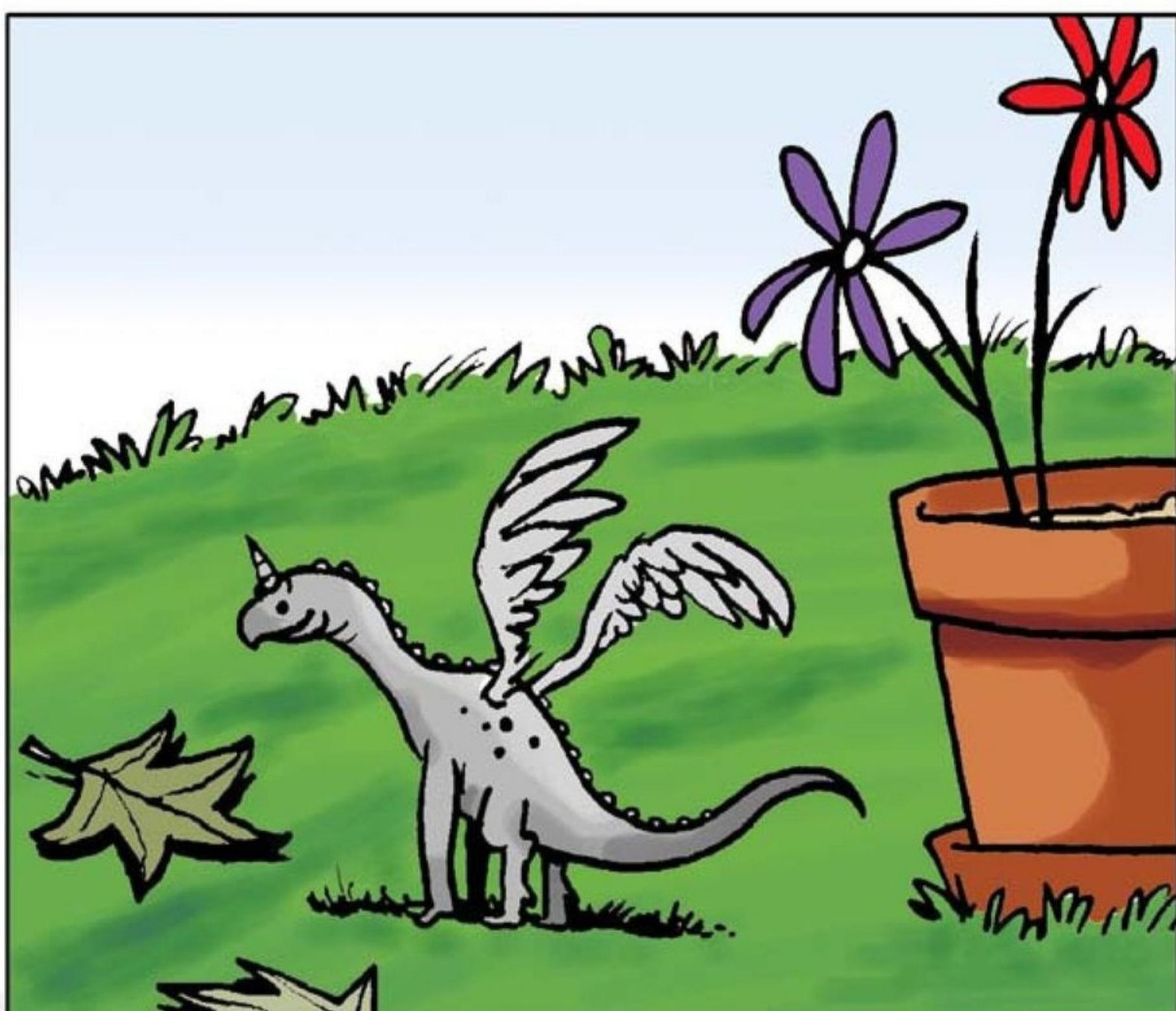
No one else seemed terribly surprised. Angie decided that it must be one of those things like snapdragons. Only yesterday, her best friend Gina had explained how snapdragons can talk and can grow in anyone's backyard. Apparently, they were a thing the Jarrett adults didn't think about much. They were fascinating creatures in Angie's opinion. Or maybe they didn't know about the thesaurus either.

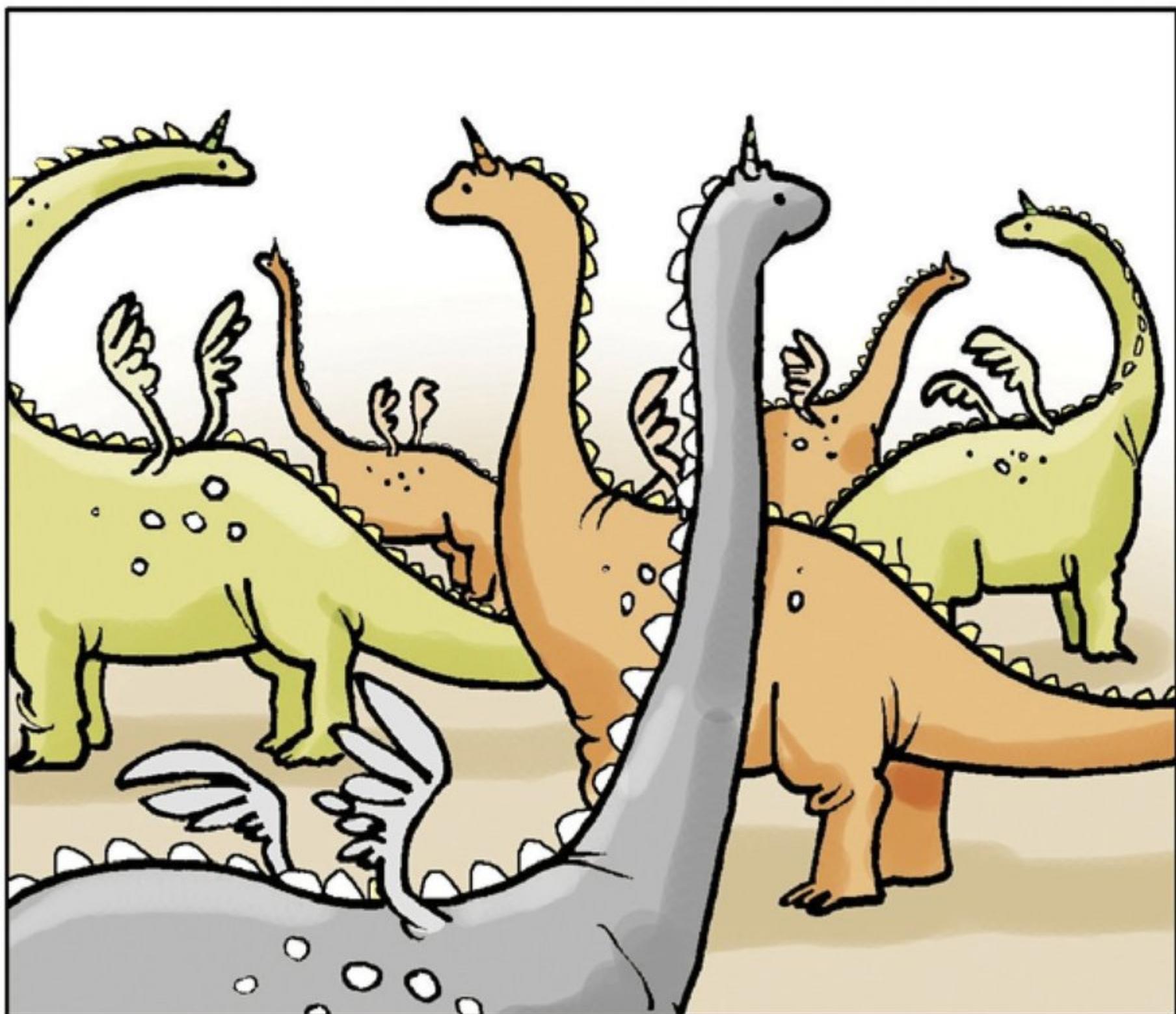




The questions began to form in her mind.
How many wings does a thesaurus have?
Is a thesaurus an herbivore? Are they tiny?
Are they huge? Do they have feathers?
Do they walk on two feet? There was
much to be discovered.

Three blocks from home, Angie changed course. She headed for a wandering path that added an extra ten minutes to her walk. She needed time to wonder. What is a thesaurus like? If it lived at home, it had to be small. She hadn't seen one before, so they had to be at least as small as a parakeet. She hadn't noticed Gina's parakeet until the third sleepover at her house. Thesauruses were probably gray. Just like the dinosaurs in the program on PBS she had seen two weeks ago. This made it seem even more likely that the thesaurus could have wings.





Maybe it was not so small. Any dinosaur that survived the ice age must be pretty amazing. Maybe it was a magical creature. No, that would be silly. Maybe it could camouflage itself, or shrink—the opposite of a blowfish. Perhaps they weren't as common as the teacher thought, and the class would all be asking for a loaner from Mrs. Ellis on Thursday. Angie hoped they weren't small. But in the end, she decided they must be. Twenty-five large thesauruses (or is it thesauri?) would never fit inside the classroom.



And so the daydream began. Suddenly, there were thesaurus all over the place. The grassy path was overrun with the stubby creatures. They were roaring their little roars, and changing color as they ran toward Angie. She stepped aside just as the charging thesaurus vanished into thin air. All the way home, there were incidents with the mischievous imaginary dinosaurs.

Angie was so excited when she got home that she forgot to close the door. Without looking up from the paper, her mother asked Angie to finish her grand entrance. Angie did so, and looked at her mother expectantly. She was determined to be patient.

After nearly five seconds of calm silence, Angie began in a breathless voice. “Mom! Listen! I don’t know if we have one, or even if you know about them, but I have to bring a dinosaur to class on Friday! Did you know they exist? Do we have one?”



Angie's mother lowered the paper and asked, "What do you mean? We have pictures of dinosaurs in the magazine on the coffee table."

"No, mom, I have to bring in a real thesaurus."

Her mother looked strange, like she might laugh. "Angie, I know that we have a thesaurus. I'm not sure you know what it's for. Let me get it."

The excitement was terrible. Angie's mother disappeared into the den/library. Angie wondered if it had been there all along, waiting between the shelves for her to play with it. Was it a boy or a girl?





Angie's mother emerged from the room and started down the hall. There was a book in her hand. Was it a care guide for pet dinosaurs?

"Honey," her mother began, "this is a thesaurus." She handed the book to Angie and tapped her elbow. "I know it isn't what you expected, but it really is a great thing to have."



“A book?” Angie groaned. “How could a book be named something as exciting as *thesaurus*?”

“It’s a wonderful sort of book, though,” said Angie’s mother. “It is a book that has many different words for the words we already know. Let me show you.”

She took the book and opened it to a random page. She pointed to the entry for *nice*. The entry listed the words *likable*, *admirable*, *amiable*, *pleasing*, *courteous*, *kind*, and even more.



“You write stories—right, Angie?”

Angie looked from the corner of her eye at her mother. “Yes.” Her embarrassment was just beginning to fade.

“Do you ever have a hard time finding just the right word to write down?”

Angie nodded.

“This book, like the dictionary, is a tool for writers. Like a hammer to a carpenter or a tractor to a farmer. It’s pretty neat, when you think about it.”





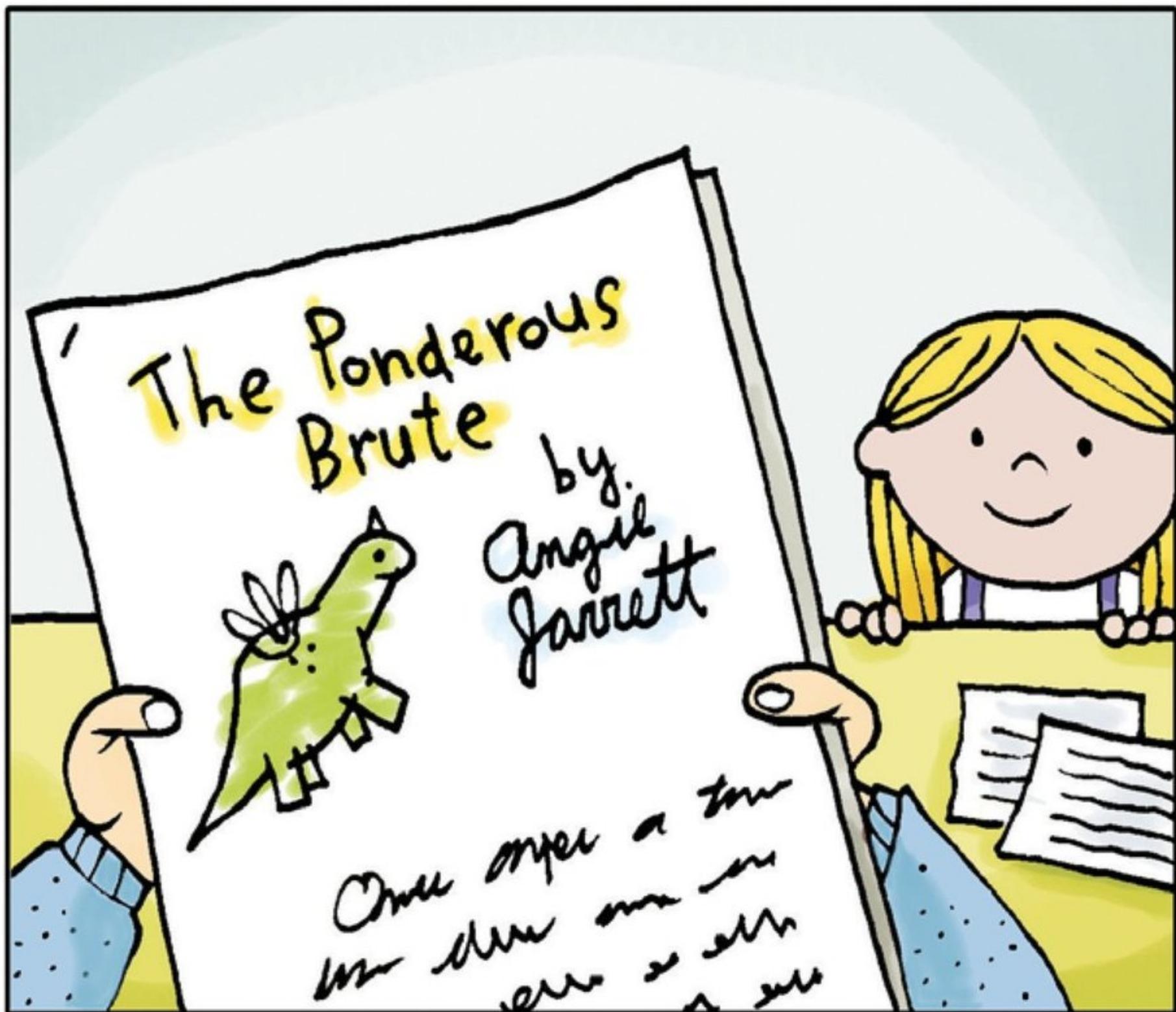
But Angie wasn't thinking about it. She was busy watching her miniature Jurassic Park go extinct in the living room. Her mother gave her a belated welcome home hug, and headed into the kitchen. Angie stayed in the living room listening to cooking sounds. It seemed to be stir-fry. Angie's disappointment began to evaporate like her daydream and was carried out the kitchen window with the smell of bell peppers.

Angie looked over at the book beside her. She picked it up and found the word *dream*. There were at least fifteen words in the entry, all of them slightly different but somehow the same. She found words that led her to more words that led her to new words that sounded mysterious, incredible, and sometimes rather funny. When her mother called her to dinner, Angie forgot to put the book down before she began to eat.





That night, Angie had a dream. First, she was in the forest with millions of small dinosaurs. Then, the forest became the hill on the playground at school. The dinosaurs stood as if they were waiting. Angie's favorite green notebook and pencil appeared in her hand. She began to write about the dinosaurs, and they waited patiently as she found just the right words to tell their story. She found everything she needed—in the thesaurus.



On Friday, Mrs. Ellis asked the students to take out their thesauruses. Angie was ready, and this time, she wasn't daydreaming. Everyone in the class was to write a story about anything in the world. They were supposed to use the thesaurus for at least three words. When the bell rang, Angie handed in her story. Mrs. Ellis whistled as she read the title. *The Ponderous Brute*, it said. The drawing under the title showed a chubby dinosaur, and Mrs. Ellis grinned. She knew she was in for a treat.

The Thesaurus
Level R Leveled Book
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Illustrated by Chris Harding

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