

## At the Tailor to the Saur \*



Crispin Cushon dreaded the arrival of the next customer to his shop. All other dinosaurs in town posed less of a problem than Benny. For, you see, Benny was a normal, healthy young brontosaurus. Cushon's tailor shop was certainly big enough to accommodate triceratopses, stegosauruses, and even difficult customers like the velociraptors: You couldn't turn your back on one of those characters without someone's eggs disappearing.

Anyway, he knew Benny the Brontosaurus was about to arrive within the next five minutes, and he started moving some of the furniture around to make more room for him. As the clock struck two, Benny walked in the store, making sure that his 50-foot neck did not bump into the rafters. He lowered his face down to the counter and greeted Crispin the Tailor in his usual affable way:

--"Good afternoon, Mr. Cushon, how's bithness?" --for Benny, you see, had a bit of a lisp.

--"Fine, Benny...Happy to see your weighty personage. What brings you to my humble establishment?"

--"Well, thir, I need you to make me a fanthy tuxedo with a matching cape."

Crispin the Tailor shuddered inside his scaly hide.

--"Excellent. And what fabric will you prefer me to use for such a fanth...er, fancy tuxedo?"

--"I want it all done in your finetht sharkskin, Mr. Cushon."

--"Shark...skin?"

--"Well, yeth. Ith there a problem?"

Crispin Cushon started his two brains thinking hard and fast.

--"Ahh...well...you see...Benny: what you require is not...impossible, but it may prove rather difficult. And when, if I may ask, do you need this tuxedo to be ready?"

--"Ath thoon as porthible. Day after tomorrow, preferably."

Now Mr. Cushon felt his innards grumble and his massive heart begin to pound as fast as a stampede of hadrosaurs. To make such a fancy tuxedo, he knew he would need at least three thousand sharks --not to mention the cape! Where could he find enough sharks to fill this incredible order? And in two days, to boot! ... But he didn't even want to start on the boots...Let Schumacher take care of that little problem.

--"Benny... It would be my privilege to make you such a garment. But I fear it would take me more than two days to order such an immense quantity of fabric. Not to mention the danger...how many fisher-saurs would it take to net such a catch, skin it, treat it, pull out all those shark teeth, ... I'm afraid it will take me more than a month just to gather the cloth. Could we perhaps interest you in some other fabric? Human perhaps? I can get my hands on some fine Italian leather."

--“Nope” –said Benny the Brontosaurus– “Only sharkskin will do.”  
--“I see.”

What Crispin the Tailor saw was that he’d be ruined for sure. He also had to get Benny out of the shop so other less picky customers could enter it. There was only room enough for Benny. Crispin’s scales started falling off of his lateral fins.

Benny could see that the tailor was upset and fidgeting. He sat down on a nearby divan and crossed his legs. This made a gigantic wardrobe armoire come crashing down, (event which did not diminish Crispin’s anxiety in the least.)

Tapping the tailor lightly on the shoulder with the tip of his tail –until then, resting two blocks down the street– Benny said:

--“Look Mithter Cushon, I believe I can tholve your sharkskin thupply problem. I will have four thousand sharkskins ready for you tomorrow, that ith *if* I can have a deal on the prithe, of courthe.”

Mr. Cushon looked up at the tiny head resting on Benny’s monumental neck and blubbered: --“Buh, buh, but...what prithe...price...how...thupply...ply?” After he regained his composure, Crispin said: --“Of course, I’ll give you a 75% reduction on the work if you bring me the fabric.”

Benny smiled. – “Then we got a deal. Thee you tomorrow.” Benny the Brontosaurus slowly backed out of the tailor’s shop, tail first, then his massive 400-ton body and finally his 50-foot neck. Only the head remained at the door, his left eye winking at Mr. Cushon.

The next day, Benny the Brontosaurus arrived at Crispin Cushon’s tailor shop carrying on his ample back a hundred saddlebags cramped full of sharkskins. Crispin was astounded. He couldn’t help himself as his curiosity overcame his usual professional composure. Crispin had to ask:

--“Benny! How did you manage to accomplish such an amazing feat!?”

--“Easy, Mr. Cushon” –said Benny– “You know, of courthe, how much tiger sharks love red caviar. Well, I bought mythelf some ordinary red caviar pathte (about five belugas’ worth) and thpread it all over my tail. Then I put my tail in the Arizona Ocean and wiggled it for a few minutes. Sure enough, the tiger sharks started biting! In the wink of a pterodactyl’s eye, I had four thouthand sharks clamped to my tail. I then thimply pulled it out of the ocean and, voilà...!”

So saying, Benny began unstrapping the saddlebags and laying them on the floor of Crispin Cushon’s shop, which filled up to the ceiling with the bulk of four thousand sharks. After due payment of a deposit, Benny left Crispin Cushon’s shop, who busied himself with the measuring and cutting. As he already new Benny’s gargantuan measurements, he called his apprentices in, and set to work designing and sawing the tuxedo and cape. They worked all day and all night, finishing just in time for Benny to pick up the remarkable ensemble.

The next day, as the clock struck two, Benny the Brontosaur arrived at Crispin’s shop and soon enough was beaming with pleasure as he saw his beautiful new shiny tuxedo. A few nips and tucks and final alterations, and Benny began strutting about admiring what he could see of his reflection in the tailor’s tiny mirrors.

--“Exthellent!” -- he said— “just what I wanted! Thank you, Mr. Cushon, thir. I can’t wait to tell all my brontothaurian fraternity brotherth about this shop and recommend you to them! I know they’re all going to need thimilar formal wear for the upcoming Governor’s Ball.”

As Benny was leaving the shop, Crispin Cushon smile slowly dissolved, and he collapsed sideways upon his credenza.

\* Written by Pascual Delgado on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2003, and appearing in *The Well-Dressed Brontosaurus*, an anthology published by the Canadian Authors Association in 2004. Cover illustration is also by Delgado.