



# The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs: A New History of Their Lost World

Written by Stephen Brusatte

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# The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs: A New History of Their Lost World

By Stephen Brusatte

## The Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich

The dinosaurs. Sixty-six million years ago, the Earth's most fearsome creatures vanished. Today they remain one of our planet's great mysteries. Now *The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs* reveals their extraordinary, 200-million-year-long story as never before.

## The Rise And Fall Of Jim Crow

In this captivating narrative (enlivened with more than seventy original illustrations and photographs), Steve Brusatte, a young American paleontologist who has emerged as one of the foremost stars of the field—naming fifteen new species and leading groundbreaking scientific studies and fieldwork—masterfully tells the complete, surprising, and new history of the dinosaurs, drawing on cutting-edge science to dramatically bring to life their lost world and illuminate their enigmatic origins, spectacular flourishing, astonishing diversity, cataclysmic extinction, and startling living legacy. Captivating and revelatory, *The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs* is a book for the ages.

## The Rise And Fall Of Dodo

Brusatte traces the evolution of dinosaurs from their inauspicious start as small shadow dwellers—they themselves the beneficiaries of a mass extinction caused by volcanic eruptions at the beginning of the Triassic period—into the dominant array of species every wide-eyed child memorizes today, T. rex, Triceratops, Brontosaurus, and more. This gifted scientist and writer re-creates the dinosaurs' peak during the Jurassic and Cretaceous, when thousands of species thrived, and winged and feathered dinosaurs, the prehistoric ancestors of modern birds, emerged. The story continues to the end of the Cretaceous period, when a giant asteroid or comet struck the planet and nearly every dinosaur species (but not all) died out, in the most extraordinary extinction event in earth's history, one full of lessons for today as we confront a "sixth extinction."

## The Rise And Fall Of The Roman Empire

Brusatte also recalls compelling stories from his globe-trotting expeditions during one of the most exciting eras in dinosaur research—which he calls “a new golden age of discovery” and offers thrilling accounts of some of the remarkable findings he and his colleagues have made, including primitive human-sized tyrannosaurs; monstrous carnivores even larger than T. rex; and paradigm-shifting feathered raptors from China.

## The Rise And Fall Of American Growth

An electrifying scientific history that unearths the dinosaurs' epic saga, *The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs* will be a definitive and treasured account for decades to come.

I love dinosaurs.

I have an early memory of being at nursery school and always running straight for the plastic dinosaurs at playtime. I was a dinosaur hog. *The Land Before Time* was one of my favourite movies. I watched *Jurassic Park* and had a recurring nightmare about a T.Rex trying to attack our house.

They are so fascinating. Unbelievably huge reptiles that roamed the entire planet. Not only that, but it's so strange that we regard them as something of a failed species. Dinosaurs were around for 150 million years. The homo genus is only about 2.5 million years old, and homo sapiens have been around for a measly 300,000 years. Perhaps less. You think we have another 150 million years in us? I love dinosaurs.

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So, yeah, I love dinosaurs.

Problem is, I just couldn't stand Brusatte's writing. He obviously knows his stuff about dinosaurs, but I thought he made the potentially fascinating information very dry. And that's just when he's sticking to the subject. It gets far worse when he goes on long tangents about himself, name-dropping the people he's met and worked with. Unless it's a female paleontologist, in which case: who? You mean *whatsisname's* wife?

I usually like it when non-fiction writers put a little something of themselves into their writing. It adds some personality and pulls you along for the journey, such as in Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. But it helps if the writer isn't, um, annoying. Brusatte just comes across as a self-important nerd. There's too much about him, and it isn't enjoyable to read.

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## The Rise And Fall Of Bossanova

Image from the Smithsonian Hope A Tyrannosaurus Rex is a thing with feathers.

----- Emily Dickinson Steve Brusatte Wait, what? You're kidding, right? Say it ain't so. Well, there is some disagreement about this among paleontologists, but, according to Steve Brusatte, while they may not have matched up to Marc Bolan in a boa, and the feathers in question were maybe more like porcupine quills than the fluffy sort of plumage one might find on, say, an ostrich, those things poking out of the T. rex

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Hello, lunch - Image from The Real T-Rex BBC special "this one from the Mirror

But I promise, not all the revelations in The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs will make you reach for some extra alcoholic or pharmaceutical sleep inducement. What we know about dinosaurs has continued to evolve, at an accelerating rate. Some revelations in the book are surprising and delightful, like the fact that new dinosaur species are being discovered at the rate of about one a week, and that this has been going on a while. There is a lot of catching up to be done since we mastered the basic few, Triceratops, T-Rex, Brontosaurus, Archaeopteryx, Stegasaurus, Dimetrodon, and the usual gang of idiots. Much bigger gang to keep track of these days. [I strongly urge you to check out Brusatte's U of Edinburgh lecture, linked in EXTRA STUFF, for some very decisively feathered other members of the T. rex family. Fluffy indeed!]

Steve Brusatte - looking for Triassic vertebrate footprints in a quarry in Poland "image from palaeocast.com (Sorry, dear. I could have sworn I dropped the engagement ring right here!)

Dinosaurs had a pretty long reign as kings/queens of the hill, but they had to begin sometime. Once upon a time all the land was one, linked from north to south, called Pangea. Monster monsoons raked much of the Earth, blistering heat, deserts, jungles, except of course at the poles, which were relatively balmy. This time, from about 300 to about 250 million years ago (mya) is called The Permian Period.

Then, boys and girls, the earth split a seam. All that hot material that is constantly coursing through the earth found a way out and spewed forth. Not a good time to be an earthling. It is referred to as The Permian Extinction. 90% of all life was wiped out, by lava flows, fire, global warming, airborne particles blocking the sun, and thus a dramatic, if temporary end to photosynthesis, which killed off most plant life. And the ensuing acidification of water did seriously unpleasant things to aqueous life. But, after things settled down again, which took a while, a new class of critters came to dominate, dinosaurs. Yay!

From Pangea to now 

The Permian period was followed by the Triassic, from 250 to 200 mya, fifty million years of nature gone wild (I have that videotape in the attic, I think). Over the course of the Triassic, things on the land started to look like the world we know today. But the continents would have to drift for many millions of years yet before they would resemble our current landmass configuration. The first true dinos showed up around 230 to 240 mya. But they did not have the planet to themselves. There were reptiles, fish, birds, insects, even mammals, small ones, around at the time.

Metoposaurus, Kermit's g-g-g-g-g-g-grandma, was an amphibian the size of a Buick, with a coffee-table-sized head, and, unlike those little critters you had to work with in bio lab, these pups had hundreds of very sharp teeth. It hung out by water's edge to capture anything straying too close. Mostly fish, but watch your ankles.

There is interesting material in here about what came before the dinosaurs, (dinosauromorphs, yes, really) and where the line is drawn (arbitrarily) between dino and pre-dino. You, here, you, over there. Like Middle East borders.

Brusatte walks us through the timeline of the dinos, from conditions being established at the end of the Permian, their arrival in the Triassic, to their sudden farewell at the end of the Cretaceous. Permian, Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous. Go ahead, repeat that a few times. It's the sequence of periods Brusatte covers here. The first three come in at around 50 million years each, with the Cretaceous hanging on for about 80. The last three, taken together, comprise what is known as the Mesozoic Era, aka The Age of the Dinosaurs. (Which makes no sense to me. Shouldn't it be The Era of the Dinosaurs? Or the Mesozoic Age? It's so confusing.) He shows what changed geologically, and how the changes allowed this or that lifeform to arise. (often by wiping out the competition). He also takes us along with him to dig sites around the planet, Scotland, Portugal, Poland, The American Southwest, South America, China, and more, and introduces us to some of the foremost scientists in the field.

The characters in Brusatte's tale are not all of the ancient sort. He populates each chapter with modern specimens notable for their diversity and sometimes colorful plumage. While they may all be brilliant scientists, many could easily be classified as Anates Impar. It would not be a huge stretch to imagine them populating a nerdish Cantina scene. Here are Brusatte's description of three of them.

There are many more. You can spot Thomas Carr, now a professor at Wisconsin's Carthage College, from a mile away. He has the fashion sense of a 1970s preacher and some of the mannerisms of Sheldon Cooper from *The Big Bang Theory*. Thomas always wears black velvet suits, usually with a black or dark red shirt underneath. He has long bushy sideburns and a mop of light hair. A silver skull ring adorns his hand. He's easily consumed by things and has a long-running obsession with absinthe and the Doors. That and tyrannosaurs.

Thomas Carr - image from his Twitter page

Baron Franz Nopcsa von Felso-Szilvas was literally an aristocrat who dug up dinosaur bones. He seems like the invention of a mad novelist, a character so outlandish, so ridiculous, that he must be a trick of fiction. But he was very real—a flamboyant dandy and a tragic genius, whose exploits hunting dinosaurs in Transylvania were brief respites from the insanity of the rest of his life [he had] expertise in espionage, linguistics, cultural anthropology, paleontology, motorbiking, [geology, and god knows what else].

The Baron - image from Albanianphotography.com

Jingmai [O'Connor] calls herself a Paleontologist—fitting given her fashionista style of leopard-print Lycra, piercings, and tattoos, all of which are at home in the club but stand out (in a good way) among the plaid-and-beard crowd that dominates academia; she's also the world's number-one expert on those first birds that broke the bounds of Earth to fly above their dinosaur ancestors.

Jingmai O'Connor - image from her Twitter page  
 Brusatte also shamelessly namedrops every A-list paleontologist he has encountered. Of course, it sounds like those encounters were substantial, so I guess it's ok, but I was reminded a bit of Bill Clinton's memoir, in which it seemed that every person he mentioned had either changed his life or was a close personal friend. In a way, the book constitutes a this-is-your-life look at Brusatte's paleontology career (boy meets bone?), with appearances by many of the people he had learned from or worked with. (they are legion) In addition to the studies mentioned in the book, he is the author of a widely taught textbook, *Dinosaur Paleobiology*. He is the paleo expert in residence on *Walking with Dinosaurs* (so much better than the sequel, *Fleeing from Dinosaurs*) on the BBC.

One of the things that has allowed modern paleontologists to make and continue to make ground-breaking discoveries about Earth's former tenants is the major advance in technology at their disposal. It's a lot easier, for example, to see inside a fossilized skull to measure the size and shape of internal cavities with the help of a CT scanner than it was before they were available.

A new dinosaur, feathered, winged Zhenyuanlong from China - image from The Conversation

You will learn some fascinating new information about dinos, some of it startling. This includes how sauropods managed those loooooong necks, why wild diversification happened when it did, why it took dinosaurs as long as it did to get large and take over. There is a fascinating bit on how some dinosaurs can pack an extra punch by getting air while they breathe in and out, surprising intel on how some of the critters you thought were dinosaurs aren't, and directions on where you can look to see actual living dinosaurs today. He punctures some of the notions from the Jurassic Park movies. If trapped by a T-Rex, for instance, do not remain motionless. Rex has binocular vision and can see you perfectly well, whether you are sitting down in a port-o-san or hiding in or under a vehicle. Wave buh-bye.

If you do not know what this is from you need to get out more

Speaking of un-fond farewells, Brusatte take us up to and through the biggest bang of them all, on Earth anyway, 66 mya. His description of the horror that marked the end of the dinosaurs is graphic, and disturbing. It was the worst day in the history of our planet. A few hours of unimaginable violence that undid more than 150 million years of evolution and set life on a new course. T. rex was there to see it.

Look, up in the sky. It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a...! Oh, shit

Artwork by Donald E. Davis

Brusatte has written an eminently readable pop-science history of the dinosaurs, with accessible info on geology, biology, and the work of paleontologists, who are laboring tirelessly (and maybe obsessively) to find out the answers to questions that are as old as humanity's awareness of the erstwhile inhabitants of our planet. This is one of those books that should be in every household. You do not need to be a scientist to get a lot out of it. The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs, bubbling with the enthusiasm of its author, will be an enjoyable and enlightening read for homo sapiens of all ages from pre-teen through fossil. Learning more about Earth's illustrious, impressive, sometimes terrifying, and sometimes adorable former tenants never gets old. Really, who doesn't love dinosaurs?

Review posted " April 13, 2018

Publication date " April 24, 2018

December 2018 - Dinosaurs may no longer rule the earth, but The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs rules the 2018 Goodreads Choice Award for Science. Reached for comment, a spokesman for Mr. Brusatte offered the following response.

## =====EXTRA STUFF

Links to the author's personal and Twitter pages

Episode 37 of Palaeocast features Steve talking about Therapods and Birds - December 1, 2014 - 44:00

A presentation by Brusatte, who is a wonderful speaker, on Tyrannosaur Discoveries, at the U of Edinburgh - Watch this, really. Great stuff.

In the above, Brusatte talks about feathered dinos, among other things. Meet Yutyranus huali, (artist's interpretation) a feathered tyrannosaur from China (but you can call him Fluffy) - image from The Conversation

A fun article from the BBC - Legendary dinosaurs that we all imagine completely wrong - By Josh Gabbatiss - 3/21/16

NY Times - April 4, 2018 - Brusatte is keeping busy, publishing, with his team, a new study about the presence of dinos in Scotland, specifically in the Isle of Skye. In Footprints on Scotland's Isle of Skye, Signs of a Dinosaur Playground - by Nicholas St. Fleur

This image of a sauropod print accompanied the above article - from the University of Edinburgh

An interesting lecture (33 minutes) on how paleontologists research dinosaurian social behavior and what they have found - Social Behaviour in Dinosaurs - with David Hone Hone's delivery has a sing-song rhythm that can be a bit soporific, but the content is fascinating. Of particular interest is the basis for juvenile clustering.

May, 2018 - Smithsonian Magazine - So much is going on in China, paleontologically, not all of it wonderful, as wonderful new resources are found and explored - The Great Chinese Dinosaur Boom - by Richard Conniff

This cluster of dinosaur egg fossils, on display at the Tianyu Museum, dates back 70 million years to the late Cretaceous era - shot by Stefen Chow - text and image from above article  
It reminds me of that scene in the first Alien film when they discover the nesting site

-----May 29, 2018 - Check out Ira Flatow's effervescent review in the NY Times - When the Dinosaurs Reign

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----June 2, 2018 - National Geographic - Wonderful, informative interview with Brusatte by Simon Worrall - Why Today is the Golden Age for Dinosaur Discoveries

----December 17, 2018 - Feathers and Fur Fly Over Pterosaur Fossil Finding - By Nicholas St. Fleur  
An artist's rendering of a short-tailed pterosaur from above article - from Yuan Zhang/Nature Ecology & Evolution

----February 21, 2019 - NY Times - Tiny Tyrannosaur Hints at How T. Rex Became King - by Nicholas St. Fleur

A new species of dinosaur, a tiny relative of the Tyrannosaurus rex, called Moros intrepidus, lived 96 million years ago and its fossils were found in central Utah. - Credit Jorge Gonzalez - image and text from above article

=====STUFFING

If you are one of those for whom the reference did not bang a gong, Marc Bolan was the leader of a band named T.Rex. He was one of the progenitors of what was called Glam Rock.

Anates Impar - really? You could not do a Google translate? It means Odd Ducks, ok. Sheesh. Really, don't make me explain everything again, or I'll have to take points off your final grade. And if you do not know what "the Cantina scene" is, look it up or don't come back. Yes, now. Run!

This flamboyantly feathered Rex image is from Deviant Art "Yeah, I doubt it looked like this too, but a fun image I wanted to share

Full disclosure: - Ok, I stole the final line of the review from my illustrious book goddess. I only steal from the best. Thank you, dearest. ...more

Another ambivalent three stars for a book that has two strands of highly varying success in my opinion.

The good part of the book is the clear and vivid writing about dinosaurs. I particularly liked learning new things about dinosaur-like creatures that lived among them but happen to fall outside the classification, and reasons why dinosaurs could evolve to be absolutely gigantic (those big sauropods) or fly. I liked reading about the nomenclature of new and unusual finds (it's not all Latin anymore). Another ambivalent three stars for a book that has two strands of highly varying success in my opinion.

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and reasons why dinosaurs could evolve to be absolutely gigantic (those big sauropods) or fly. I liked reading about the nomenclature of new and unusual finds (it's not all Latin anymore). The section on the immediate aftermath of the asteroid strike is gripping and horrifying. ("But what fell from the sky was not water. It was beads of glass and chunks of rock, each one scalding hot.")

The bad part is the writing about the author's personal experiences as he grew from an annoying, precocious teen (which he freely admits he was) into a working paleontologist. Frankly he comes off as more than a little self-satisfied--a sighting of the Jerkus brillianticus, if you will. His mentors and collaborators are uniformly amazing and brilliant and are described in a way that makes nearly all of them sound dull and interchangeable, an endless parade of brilliant bearded dudes drinking beer in exotic locales that are mainly described in terms of their nattering locals and unpleasant weather. (If you think I've used the word "brilliant" a lot in this paragraph, you won't believe this book!) Though he names several women paleontologists in these pages, he rarely seems to work with any of them, and notes with apparent enjoyment crass jokes at bars and commentary about their physiques from a speaker at an international conference. The personal recollections strike a disagreeable note that undercuts one of the goals of the book, which is to show how cool it would be to be a paleontologist.

Bottom line: Read this, while holding your nose a little bit, if you're interested in dinosaurs.

Review copy received from Edelweiss.

Edited to add: I am going to close the comments on this, since no one seems capable of talking about dinosaurs, but the question of examples from the book was a fair one. This review was very hard to write since the review copies specifically ask you only to quote from the finished book, which did not exist yet, so I was avoiding direct quotes. However, I have patiently waited for a library copy and spot checked a few passages that I could find by searching my Kindle copy for specific terms.

Two of the most objectionable parts that I would have quoted have been changed. In the midst of a favorable description of a hedonistic conference in Argentina (steak, drinking, dancing, etc.), the review copy mentions "an outrageous quip about the physical qualities of the foreign women in attendance." On page 42 of the finished book, the text now reads "an outrageous quip about some of the foreigners in attendance"--which makes the edit fairly obvious because the resulting sentence doesn't make a lot of sense. On page 346 of the final book, what had originally said "crass inside jokes" was edited to "inside jokes." (I hope the publisher will forgive the forbidden quoting here.)

I'm guessing the editor jumped in here, and kudos to them for doing so, but it doesn't change my overall feeling about the book. Three stars is not one star, folks! The book had some good parts (the information about the dinosaurs) and some bad parts (where the author talks about himself). This is hardly scintillating memoir from someone who thinks that "he never lets his students pay for beer" (finished book pg. 289) makes someone a really cool and interesting person. If you think so too, you can read this book without even holding your nose as I originally suggested. If you don't, you can still read it.

...more

## The Rise And Fall Of The Dinosaurs

I loved the parts about dinosaurs. Fun facts, history, evidence and speculation on behavior, recent discoveries, distribution as the continents divided and spread out. It's a compact assessable update on dinosaurs large and small. Oh, just another coelophysid, no this is something new!

I tuned out the sections of the author's personal experience. I wasn't interested. Based on other GR reviews, that's probably for the best.

If, like me, you were a kid during the Jurassic Park era, you know that the new generations have an interest in dinosaurs which is ten hundred times less than we had in the 1990s. At the time, dinosaurs were everywhere: on TV, on our first computers, in video games, even in cereal boxes. Sometimes I can't help but being flabbergasted by the notion that today's kindergartners don't know what a diplodocus is, or exactly how tall and heavy a brontosaurus was.

Of course, my notions about dinosaurs a If, like me, you were a kid during the Jurassic Park era, you know that the new generations have an interest in dinosaurs which is ten hundred times less than we had in the 1990s. At the time, dinosaurs were everywhere: on TV, on our first computers, in video games, even in cereal boxes. Sometimes I can't help but being flabbergasted by the notion that today's kindergartners don't know what a diplodocus is, or exactly how tall and heavy a brontosaurus was.

Of course, my notions about dinosaurs also stopped growing after a couple of years, with the result that the last time I updated them, little Tim was still complaining about how crazy the theory that some of them may have learned how to fly was.

Brusatte literally tells us that seagulls are dinosaurs, which is cool I mean, I was so sad when they all died in that tragic accident with the meteor and mass destruction and stuff. But that is not the only reason why I am glad I read this book. Not all scientists are writers, and even less are good writers. Just because your mind literally overflows with knowledge, doesn't mean that you are also good at sharing it with others. This book, in my opinion, shows that Brusatte is not only good at his job, but also at making other people interested in what he has to say: last time a book about dinosaurs became so famous, there were only two Jurassic park movies.

This book is not as much the history of dinosaurs as it is the story of how that history has been discovered: inside it, paleontologists are nothing less than detectives who use everything in their power to reconstruct events that happened hundreds of millions of years ago.

I enjoyed being engrossed in this book, but two things always prevent me from liking any "pop science" book at a five star level, and I found them in this one as well.

First is the idealization of the character of the scientist: in these books, professors are nothing less than real life Indiana Jones, with brains as big as a star ship and looks like Captain America. Their personalities are always charming and they have more fan girls than a rockstar.

I understand that part of the reason for doing so is to keep the public interested, but part of it is genuine fanboying and blind adoration from the writer. Unfortunately, having studied and then worked in a University for almost ten years and having been in close contact with some of these superstar professors, I found out that these people are, for the majority, very different from how the public perceives them. Their flamboyant style and eccentric personality are often the result of a self-absorbed, narcissistic and sometimes borderline sociopathic personality. You can spend a couple of interesting dinners with them and being completely fascinated by their discoveries, you can listen to their speeches for hours, but don't try to marry one of them... not that I have a personal experience with that of course ðŸ˜ˆ, (jk, I totally do).

The second issue is that many of these scientific writers tend to present their discoveries, and in general the state of the art in a specific field as it is today, as the ultimate science Truth that finally answered all the questions we had in the past surrounding a specific topic. In reality, within ten years we will probably read a new book on these topics that will completely change everything that is said here, and that will also be presented as Truth. Let's never forget that every scientific theory, as revolutionary and clear as it can be, is exactly what it is: a theory, and every knowledge is temporary.

This book was one of the best, most interesting pieces of non-fiction I read this year. I recommend it to anyone who has or had interests in this topic, and also to anyone who wants to get started on dinosaurs! But remember guys:

...more

## The Rise And Fall Of The Nuestra Familia

Unlike many people, I've never been fascinated by dinosaurs. I don't recall learning about them as a child, though perhaps I did and my interest wasn't piqued enough to remember. I think my only exposure to them was via the cartoon The Flintstones. I didn't get much of a science education as a child but as an adult, science (all areas that I've learned about) is one of my favourite subjects and my favourite type of book to read. So it's a bit odd that I didn't feel compelled to read or learn abo

Unlike many people, I've never been fascinated by dinosaurs. I don't recall learning about them as a child, though perhaps I did and my interest wasn't piqued enough to remember. I think my only exposure to them was via the cartoon The Flintstones. I didn't get much of a science education as a child but as an adult, science (all areas that I've learned about) is one of my favourite subjects and my favourite type of book to read. So it's a bit odd that I didn't feel compelled to read or learn about dinosaurs -- until now.

Prior to its publication whilst preparing a book order for my library and reading about it, I knew it was one I would want to read. When it arrived and I saw its cover, I was entranced and almost bumped it ahead in my TBR list. It's better to prolong the anticipation of something good though, so I waited until it came up next in my TBR list, to read it. Wow oh wow! I can see why this won the Goodreads Choice Award 2018 for Science!

The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs: A New History of a Lost World is an utterly fascinating and absorbing read! Stephen Brusatte is a paleontologist who specializes in the evolution of dinosaurs. In this book, he brings his vast knowledge of all things dinosaur to us. With the latest research at his fingertips, he discusses how and why dinosaurs came to rule the Earth. He details the evolution and anatomy of many of the species (in my prior ignorance, I assumed there were only around 25 or so species, most notably T. Rex and Brontosaurus. I was amazed to learn that we know of over 700 different species of dinosaurs! Incredible!!) I had no clue that most dinosaurs probably had feathers, or that they came in a rainbow of colours, sometimes iridescent, and we can tell from fossils what those colours were -- even though the fossils themselves lack pigment.

We learn that wings probably first evolved as a display feature to attract mates and frighten enemies, and only gradually and accidentally evolved into something that would enable flight. We learn that a teenage T. Rex would have gained on average 5 pounds a day in order to reach its vast size. I hope they weren't as weight conscious as humans teens!

Mr. Brusatte doesn't just tell us about dinosaurs, but also about the world they thrived in, so very different from the earth humans have always called home. There is so much information on Pangea, its climate and eventual breaking apart that I found extremely interesting. He paints such a vivid picture of the world the dinosaurs inhabited. He tells the story of what the dinosaurs would have experienced in the moments after the asteroid or comet struck 65 million year ago, ending the Cretaceous period....

The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs: A New History of Their Lost World

and the reign of the dinosaurs. He tells us why and how these great and diverse creatures went extinct except for birds, and why some mammals survived when the dinosaurs could not. He tells us the story of how a scientist named Walter Alvarez figured out that an asteroid or comet had struck the earth and was responsible for the dinosaurs' extinction. It was all so very captivating!

These topics and so many others are discussed in this book and I think it will be of interest to many people. It's written for the lay person and one (obviously) does not need to have prior knowledge of dinosaurs in order to understand and enjoy this book. I went from no interest in and little knowledge of these creatures to now wanting to become an amateur fossil hunter! Kudos to Stephen Brusatte for writing such a brilliant book! ...more

5/5 for the informational sections about dinosaurs. 1/5 for the autobiographical sections about the author's academic/research career in which he comes off as a sexist narcissist. Gross.

Overall, read the sections about the dinosaurs and skip the parts about his personal experiences. I listened to the audiobook so I couldn't skim the awful, masturbatory memoir stuff, which I found unfortunate. Every time he mentions a scientist, he turns it into a self-congratulating name drop. I wish the author  
5/5 for the informational sections about dinosaurs. 1/5 for the autobiographical sections about the author's academic/research career in which he comes off as a sexist narcissist. Gross.

Overall, read the sections about the dinosaurs and skip the parts about his personal experiences. I listened to the audiobook so I couldn't skim the awful, masturbatory memoir stuff, which I found unfortunate. Every time he mentions a scientist, he turns it into a self-congratulating name drop. I wish the author had focused on the dinosaurs because that was the most interesting part and what I picked the book up to learn. ...more

## The Rise And Fall Of The Brown Buffalo

I was a dinosaur obsessed kid. I watched the entire Land Before Time series, many many times, and would rewatch BBC's Walking with Dinosaurs so often that I can still quote large segments of it verbatim despite not having watched it for over a decade.

I didn't know about this book until it won the Goodreads Choice Award for best non-fiction in 2018, and I knew I had to read it. Even though my obsession with Dinosaurs has faded, I still find the humongous animals that roamed the earth we stand on I was a dinosaur obsessed kid. I watched the entire Land Before Time series, many many times, and would rewatch BBC's Walking with Dinosaurs so often that I can still quote large segments of it verbatim despite not having watched it for over a decade.

I didn't know about this book until it won the Goodreads Choice Award for best non-fiction in 2018, and I knew I had to read it. Even though my obsession with Dinosaurs has faded, I still find the humongous animals that roamed the earth we stand on right now so freakin fascinating. They seem so alien and out of this world, its hard to really fully process they very much were alive and thriving 150 million years ago.

The information in this book was definitely interesting - when it related to the Dinosaurs. Research indicating Dinosaurs had feathers, information on new species such as a bad winged Dinosaur, crucial to understanding how Dinosaurs evolved into todays birds, explanations of how we know what colours Dinosaurs are, and conclusive proof that it was an asteroid that wiped out the Dinosaurs for good.

But that was kind of outweighed by the author - who was often incredibly annoying and injected his own story and relationships into the story way too often. He's like that guy in your class who is absolutely desperate for everyone to know he is, in fact, the smartest person in the room. The way he name dropped colleagues was not only annoying, but also confusing, as all the names got jumbled into one (and I was expected to remember them despite only being mentioned once 500 pages ago). The sexism also was a bit off-putting, especially one section that made me actually cringe - where the author gleefully recounts a palaeontologist event where the speaker spent his time talking about the bodies of female palaeontologists and talking about how many he had slept with. It reeked of the awkward nerdy boy in high school who said awful things about women to try and sound cooler but just ended up sounding like a dick everyone hated.

If you want to know about Dinosaurs, including so much emerging research you definitely would not have heard about before I do recommend this - but go into it with a huge grain of salt because the author was A Lot in my opinion. I couldn't skip his personal stories on the audiobook, but I would do that if you're reading physically.

Now, enjoy this picture of T-Rex drawn with the feathers they absolutely had

...more

Many thanks to William Morrow for sending me a copy in exchange for an honest review

I never liked dinosaurs. There I said it. As a young boy, I hated anything that could be associated with "boys", "men" or "masculinity". Not in a sexist way. I just had undiagnosed gender dysphoria. But that's not what I am here to talk about today.

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Even though I don't have much interest in dinosaurs, I still enjoyed this book. Mind you, that isn't because I understood a single word of what he was saying but because I could feel the pure joy and passion. It was almost like the author was sitting across from me, trying to explain to me the wonders of his world, smiling and stumbling over his words as one does when they are ecstatic.

That said, I was disappointed that I really didn't learn much because I couldn't understand what he was saying. Maybe it was me. Maybe not. I almost felt like I was missing something. Like, I had missed a class or seminar or previous book.

Even so, I loved his writing style. He was funny, light-hearted and used creative metaphors and clever wording.

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## The Rise And Fall Of Nations

Fun dinosaur hunting tales old and new told in a light and airy style. A decent explanation of the shaky advent of dinosaurs in the early Triassic, which I didn't know. Then around 220 million years ago, we move into the splitting up of Pangea and the long season of volcanic activity, say, 20,000,000 years, during which many non-dino species were wiped out. This was the big opportunity dinosaurs had been waiting for. What the book provides is the long chronology of dinosaurs and their appearance and development over 240 million years. A number of vexing questions are addressed, like how could the largest of the dinosaurs have managed life at such titanic size? The brontosaurus for instance?

One key reason was their exceedingly long necks which permitted them to reach higher into trees; Brusatte says it permitted them to eat the huge meals necessary to put on excessive weight. Second, was their astonishing ability to grow from guinea-pig size hatchlings to airplane-size adults in only about 30 or 40 years. The third feature was the development of a special new kind of lung. This unidirectional lung, seen today only in birds, was able to inhale air, yes, but also to save a little air and pass it back across the lung again on exhalation. This extra breathing efficiency made it possible for the animals to keep their large body masses cool. As part of the lungs the dinosaurs had a system of air sacs throughout their bodies. We know this because many bones of the chest cavity have big openings, called pneumatic fenestrae, where the air sacs extend deep inside. They are exactly the same structures in modern birds, and they can only be made with air sacs. The air sacs also have the added benefit of lightening the skeleton when they invade bone. In fact they hollow out the bone, so that it still has a strong outer shell but is much more light weight... The vertebra were so engulfed by air sacs that they were little more than honeycombs, featherweight but still strong. And that's advantage four: The air sacs allowed sauropods to have a skeleton that was both sturdy and the light enough to move around.

A fascinating if brief picture of dino-era predation is also given, which shows all the mechanisms of selection working superbly hundreds of millions of years before Charles Darwin came along to articulate them.

They vanished after the Cretaceous extinction event 66 million years ago when a meteor impact made the 112-mile wide Chicxulub crater (see Walter Alvarez) in the Gulf of Mexico.

This might be the right guy to serve us in the stead of Stephen Jay Gould. There's no one even remotely like SJG but Mr. Brusatte might be a viable substitute. If he's going to fill those shoes

The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs: A New History of Their Lost World

though, heâ€™s going to have to read widely in areas of interest that have nothing to do with paleontology; this as a means of developing his own inimitable encyclopedic styleâ€™which should remain light and airy. (Why canâ€™t all my male authors look as nice as this one?)

I read onâ€™! ...more

Dinosaurs!

For me that word is enough to at least flip through the pages of a book. Brusatte's work can be easily considered as a layman's guide to dinosaurs. Really enjoyed the almost casual and anecdotal narrative by the author, made me feel less dumb for not knowing anything "scientific" about the species. Quite remarkable how fast I finished reading this one, considering that I take lot more time reading non-fics. It was definitely a hard-to-put-down/away kind of a book.

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I liked how the author busted a few myths about dinosaurs as have been portrayed in popular culture by stating reasons and explanations carried out through research done in the recent past. Extra points for the numerous illustrations and images of the locations and species that were mentioned.

All this mention of dinos made me reminiscent of a day I spent last year with these species :D

That's a T-rex btw :)

And adding this place as a definite MUST-VISIT for my next trip...

Bottom image is of the Yale Peabody Museum, courtesy Google ...more