

Every fossil tells a story. Best-selling paleontology author Donald R. Prothero describes twenty-five famous, beautifully preserved fossils in a gripping, scientific history of life on Earth. Recounting the adventures behind the discovery of these objects and fully interpreting their significance within the larger fossil record, Prothero creates a riveting and enlightening overview for anyone interested in the history of life on our planet. The twenty-five fossils lovingly portrayed in this book catch animals in their evolutionary splendor as they transition from one kind of organism to another. We witness extinct plants and animals of microscopic and immense size and thrilling diversity. We learn about fantastic land and sea creatures that have no match in nature today. Along the way, we encounter such fascinating fossils as the earliest trilobite, *Olenellus*; the giant shark *Carcharocles*; the Frogamander and the Turtle on the Half Shell; the fishibian *Tiktalik*; the first bird, *Archaeopteryx*; the walking whale *Ambulocetus*; enormous marine reptiles and the biggest dinosaurs known; the gigantic hornless rhinoceros *Paraceratherium*, the largest land mammal that ever lived; and the *Australopithecus* nicknamed Lucy, the oldest human skeleton. We learn about the scientists and adventurers who pioneered paleontology and the larger intellectual and social contexts in which their discoveries were made. Finally, we are told where to see these splendid fossils in the world's great museums. Ideal for all who love prehistoric landscapes and delight in the history of science, Prothero's new book will be a treasured addition to any bookshelf, stoking curiosity in the evolution and life on Earth.

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