# The Story of Life in 25 Fossils

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Donald R Prothero

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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 history of life on our planet. The twenty-five fossils 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 "fishibian" Tiktaalik; the "Frogamander" and the "Turtle on the Half-Shell"; enormous marine reptiles and the biggest dinosaurs known; the first bird, Archaeopteryx; the walking whale Ambulocetus; the gigantic hornless rhinoceros Paraceratherium, the largest land mammal that ever lived; and the Australopithecus nicknamed "Lucy," the oldest human skeleton. We meet the scientists and adventurers who pioneered paleontology and learn about the larger intellectual and

social contexts in which their discoveries were made. Finally, we find out 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, this book makes a treasured addition to any bookshelf, stoking curiosity in the evolution of life on Earth.

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