

[PDF] My Beloved Brontosaurus: On The Road With Old Bones, New Science, And Our Favorite Dinosaurs

Brian Switek - pdf download free book

Books Details:

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Author: Brian Switek

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Description:

From Switek, a journalist who digests technical literature on paleontology for mass-market publications, presents dinosaurs through his own experience of enthusiasm, from childhood to his late-twenties present, for these giants of the earth. As a kid, his favorite behemoth was brontosaurus, which still inspires his adult imagination, though he knows apatosaurus replaced it in dino taxonomy. Memory of his inspiration by an iconic if mistakenly named dinosaur echoes in his

tour of changing interpretations of dinosaurs by paleontologists during the century-plus they have studied them. Switek's memories arise in descriptions of his visits to exhibitions of fossils, lending a road-trip tenor to a narrative that describes the up-to-date knowledge about dinosaurs, contrasting present views with previous caricatures of dinosaurs as solitary, oversize dimwits doomed to go down for the count in the evolutionary boxing match. Switek's chapters tout dinosaurs as colorful, feather- and fuzz-covered creatures. Consideration of social behavior, from herding to fighting to reproduction, has spawned scientific theories on which, as well as those that debate extinction, Switek reports. Writing with unaffected ardor, Switek will resonate with readers fascinated by dinosaurs. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"Charming . . . We are beneficiaries of Mr. Switek's undiminished passion . . . The book is a delight, coming along when so much has changed in our understanding of dinosaurs, ever since the beginning of a renaissance in dinosaur studies in the 1970s and '80s . . . This may be the one book for catching up on what has become of the dinosaurs you thought you knew from grade school."

—*The New York Times*

"*My Beloved Brontosaurus* is, in many ways, science writer Brian Switek's love letter to his favorite animal . . . But the book is more than a personal ode to fossils. Switek meets experts, tours museums and visits excavation sites. He is searching no longer for preserved eggs that might one day hatch dino-babies but rather for an understanding of what life in the age of dinosaurs was like."

—*The Washington Post*

"Switek geeks out gloriously on everything from the truth about *Jurassic Park* to the ugliest roadside dinosaurs he has ever seen. He's a friendly guide to the latest in dinosaur science, whizzing through journal article after journal article on how cross sections of dinosaur bone can tell us about their physiology, or how fossil olfactory lobes can reveal their sense of smell through time . . . Much has been written about the 'dinosaur revolution' of recent decades, in which the idea of sluggish, passive reptiles transformed into more active and engaging creatures. Switek takes the science a step farther and into the 21st century."

—*The Dallas Morning News*

"Switek passionately and playfully explores scientists' evolving perception of the wild, wonderful dinosaur world, emphasizing at every turn the dynamic nature of their field despite its now inanimate subjects . . . Switek intersperses his rich, well-researched scientific and historical discussions with personal anecdotes and cultural signposts, weaving together a narrative that reveals the current state of the field as well as some of the wrong turns along the way."

—*Science*

"Fortunately for us, Brian Switek has continued to channel the enthusiasms of his own inner five-year-old. In his zany, sometimes mind-blowing romp through the new science of old bones . . . you too can nerd out anew . . . the discoveries Switek shares fill the old world with new wonders . . . Switek rekindles that childhood amazement at how vast the dinosaur world really was."

—*Barnes & Noble Review*

"[Switek] deftly brings the concerns of dinosaur fanatics regarding the dinosaurian public image to the popular culture . . . it's always a treat to read someone so captivated by the romance of natural history . . . Switek's message is that dinosaurs are a relevant, vital field of study because the illumination extends to broader issues of evolution and the fate of our world. In the same way, *My*

Beloved Brontosaurus uses the engaging topic of dinosaur lives as a way to celebrate the ongoing exploration of science at large.”

—*Love in the Time of Chasmosaurs* (blog)

“Cleverly written, well researched and sprinkled with lots of tidbits of information gleaned from dinosaur sites that include Utah’s wealth of material, Brian Switek’s *My Beloved Brontosaurus: On the Road with Old Bones, New Science and Our Favorite Dinosaurs* is a jewel.”

—*Deseret News*

“Switek has a knack for finding fascinating specifics and presenting them in engaging ways. He excels at relating fossil finds to their once-living counterparts, giving these animals an awesome sense of reality. Even readers whose younger days of dinosaur frenzy are long extinct will find *My Beloved Brontosaurus* a fascinating read.”

—*Shelf Awareness* (starred review)

“Fascinating . . . Switek’s scope of knowledge is awesome . . . This is in the classic ‘news you can use’ for nerds genre.”

—*Discover* magazine’s “Gene Expression” blog

“If you are itching to learn more about dinosaurs than just the bare bones, so to speak, then Brian Switek’s *My Beloved Brontosaurus* is a must-read . . . In addition to being packed with fresh research, this book is just flat-out fun to read . . . Perhaps Switek’s greatest triumph with *My Beloved Brontosaurus* is proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that dinosaurs are not some esoteric, irrelevant subject, but are deeply connected to our own human story.”

—The Mindhut

“Switek’s dinomania is infectious. The book charms with the author’s passionate curiosity . . . half guidebook, half love note. Switek lays out an accessible, rich history of these creatures, along the way meditating on the larger issues raised by their ancient lives and our modern study of them, including our evolving understanding of evolution, the role of personality and bias in the scientific process, and the psychology of just what we humans see in these fascinating monsters.”

—*The Boston Globe*

“Switek’s writing is crisp and clean, and he knows his dinosaurs . . . [He] does a good job of keeping up with the latest refinements in dinosaur science. Crucially, he shares his enthusiasm well, writing about the fun, the weird and the wonderful without the tall tales of the explorers of old.”

—*New Scientist*

“Switek’s book is a lifeline for the dinosaur enthusiast—an entertaining guide to the latest science of dinosaurs.”

—*ScienceNews*

“[C]harming . . . Read Mr. Switek’s book to rekindle your love of all things dinosaur: the cheesy movies, the action figures, the many happy hours spent wandering through imaginary Jurassic jungles. But more than that, read it to remind yourself that the dinosaurs’ story is our story and that, as Mr. Switek writes, ‘extinction is the ultimate fate of all species. Nothing so majestically encapsulates these simple, powerful truths of nature quite like a dinosaur.’”

—*The Wall Street Journal*

“[Switek] offer[s] a compelling mixture of reliable information, personal experiences and thoughts, anecdotes about paleontological research and even science philosophy, delivered in a breezy and

engaging style . . . [he] paints a comprehensive picture of how our understanding of dinosaur evolution gradually advances . . . Switek has succeeded in covering a wide range of interesting topics in dinosaur palaeontology with infectious enthusiasm.”

—*Nature*

“A charming journey . . . Making scientific concepts accessible using a playful voice, in the manner of Neil DeGrasse Tyson and Malcolm Gladwell, Switek guides readers through the ever-shifting world of conventional dino-wisdom, from why they became the dominant life form of their time, to what they looked like outside those giant bones, and even covering how they might have had sex.”

—*Salt Lake City Weekly*

“Switek’s chatty, informative cross-country adventure is the perfect read for catching up on the latest, most fascinating dino science.”

—*Mental Floss*

“[A] wonderful overview of current research and knowledge of dinosaurs, for both lifelong dinolovers and people who need an introduction to the prehistoric beasts . . . informal, often humorous (in the tradition of great nonfiction writers like Mary Roach and Bill Bryson), without sacrificing scientific detail. The result is both readable and highly entertaining . . . an excellent field guide to the real dinosaurs that walked the planet.”

—DoubleXScience

“In *My Beloved Brontosaurus*, the dinosaur fanatic Brian Switek enriches the childlike sense of wonder these amazing creatures instill in us . . . Endearing, surprising, and essential to our understanding of our own evolution and our place on Earth, *My Beloved Brontosaurus* is a book that dinosaur fans and anyone interested in scientific progress will cherish for years to come.”

—*The Guardian’s GrrlScientist* blog

“Switek earned fame as the unabashed dinosaur advocate behind the fossil-focused blog Laelaps. He applies that same blend of boyish exuberance and serious science to this exploration of paleontology’s roots, revisions, and future course . . . his zeal is infectious . . . Switek fleshes out the monstrous skeletons that we all remember from childhood museum field trips with meaty new findings about their anatomy and behavior.”

—*Discover*

“A revealing work of pop paleontology . . . Engaging and accessible enough for the lay person, readers will readily agree when Switek concludes that ‘dinosaurs are better than ever.’”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Writing with unaffected ardor, Switek will resonate with readers fascinated by dinosaurs.”

—*Booklist*

“An enthusiastic account of the history, description, discoveries, ongoing controversies and inaccurate media obsession with these popular but extinct creatures . . . A genuinely informative introduction to [Switek’s] favorite subject.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Brian Switek is my favorite dinosaur tour guide in the world—smart, funny, lyrical, and can’t-put-it-down readable.”

—Deborah Blum, bestselling author of *The Poisoner’s Handbook*

“There are so many dinosaur books—but *My Beloved Brontosaurus* is something sp...

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