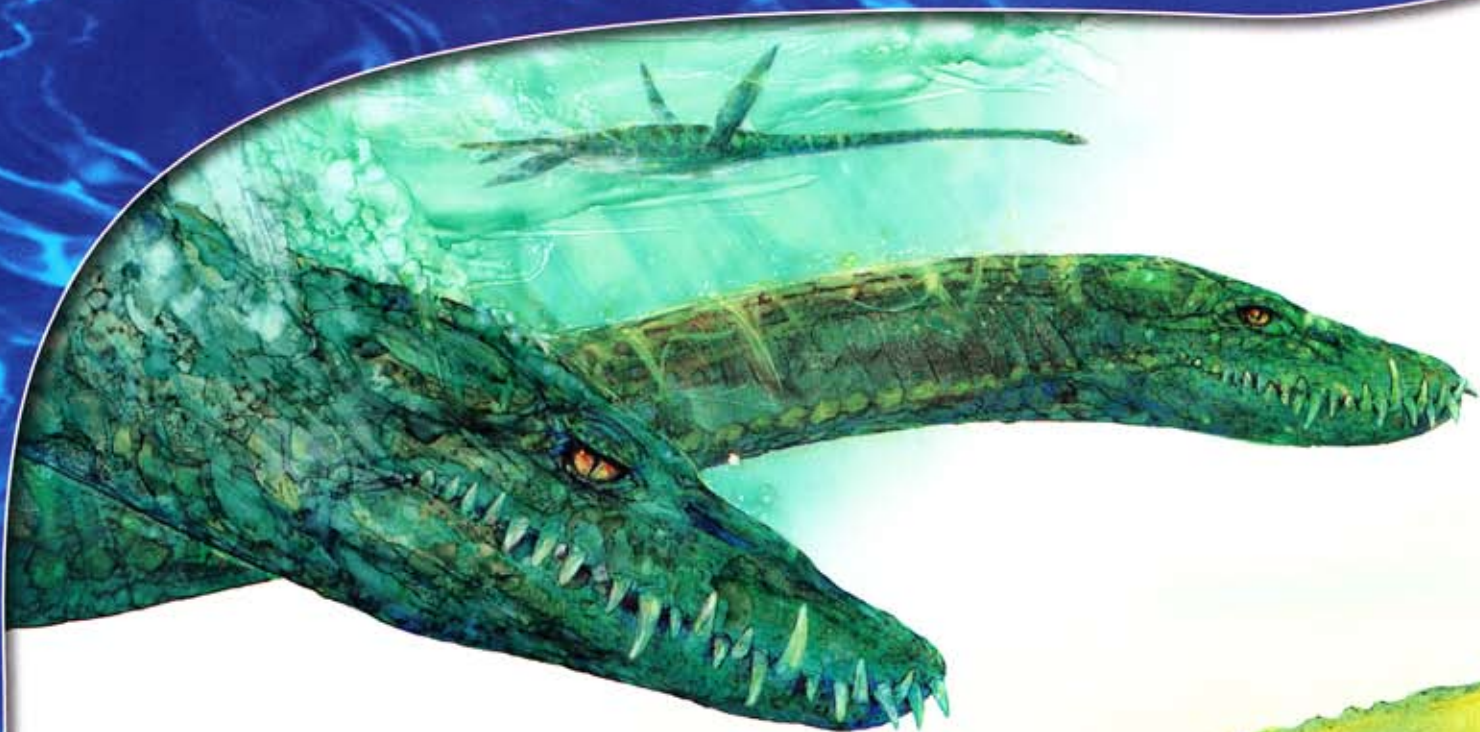


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INTRODUCTION



The Dragons in the Sea

Mention huge, awesome creatures roaming our planet and most people think of dinosaurs that lived mostly on the land. Fearsome giants like *T. rex* and plant-eating earth-shakers like *Brachiosaurus* are gone now, recalled only in the dragon stories of many cultures. Since the Curse on all of creation (Genesis 3) brought in death, disease, and bloodshed to a once-perfect world, many types of creatures are no longer with us.

The bones of such extinct animals (and sometimes bits of flesh and skin), along with the remains of many creatures that are still with us today, are found buried and preserved in

huge layers of rock. These layers were once mud or sand, laid down all over the earth by massive water action (Genesis 6–9). The preserved remains are known as fossils.

The fossils also tell us that some of the most spectacular monsters in all of creation were designed to live beneath the waves. Moviegoers shuddered by the millions at the rampaging great white shark portrayed in *Jaws*. Few would have



been aware that it could have been swallowed whole by another type of shark, of truly monstrous proportions, that once also lived in our oceans.

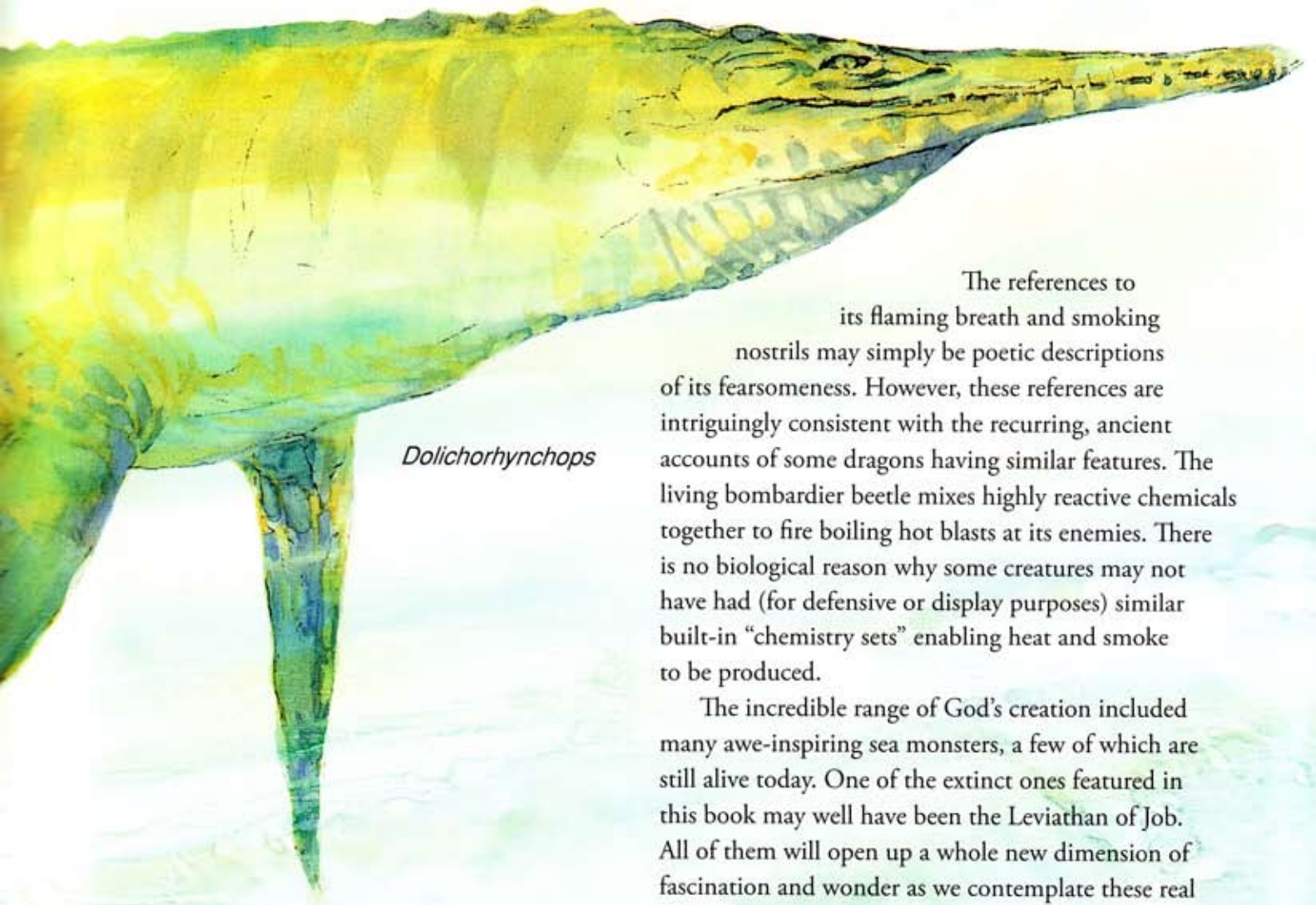
Many people are familiar with the marine reptiles called plesiosaurs and ichthyosaurs. Very few, however, have heard of the mighty *Kronosaurus*, which could have had the average-sized ichthyosaur for breakfast. Nor do they know much about *Mosasaurus* and other sea monsters featured in this book — most extinct, but some still living.

Monsters in the Bible

The Bible mentions a creature called “Behemoth.” This was obviously alive at the time the Book of Job,

with its majestic poetic language, was written. From the description in Job chapter 40, it was the largest land-dwelling, grass-eating creature God ever made. The description of its tail moving “like a cedar tree” has perplexed many commentators who realize that it cannot be an elephant or hippo. Behemoth sounds much like one of the big land-dwelling dinosaurs.

The Scripture then talks of “Leviathan” (still used today to refer to a sea monster). This is clearly a marine animal, with fearsome teeth, and armor-plated scales that shrug off spears and arrows. It is large and powerful, making the notion of its capture by humans appear ridiculous as the sea “boils” or “churns” in its wake.



Dolichorhynchops

The references to its flaming breath and smoking nostrils may simply be poetic descriptions of its fearsomeness. However, these references are intriguingly consistent with the recurring, ancient accounts of some dragons having similar features. The living bombardier beetle mixes highly reactive chemicals together to fire boiling hot blasts at its enemies. There is no biological reason why some creatures may not have had (for defensive or display purposes) similar built-in “chemistry sets” enabling heat and smoke to be produced.

The incredible range of God’s creation included many awe-inspiring sea monsters, a few of which are still alive today. One of the extinct ones featured in this book may well have been the Leviathan of Job. All of them will open up a whole new dimension of fascination and wonder as we contemplate these real “dragons of the sea.”

DRAGONS OF THE DEEP

Can the stories of sea dragons be true?

The Bible describes a frightening, huge creature that lived in the sea. Called Leviathan, it had fearsome teeth and armor-plated scales that spears and arrows could not penetrate. . . . A Norse legend tells of a colossal sea creature with many arms that could capsize a sailing ship. . . . In 1918, a group of lobster fishermen in Port Stephens, Australia, reported an encounter with “an immense shark of almost unbelievable proportions” that devastated their catch and left them in a state of shock.

As researchers discover teeth and bones from the past, these stories and many like them are no longer easily dismissed as tall tales. The fossil evidence shows that the oceans once teemed with sea monsters, and some are still alive today. Even some of those thought extinct may still be lurking in the ocean depths today!

With incredible detail, this book describes:

- *Mosasaurus*, the *Tyrannosaurus rex* of the sea
- *Megalodon*, the shark longer than a school bus
- *Sarcosuchus*, the “super croc” that weighed up to 8 tons
- *Archelon*, the sea turtle as large as a Volkswagen Beetle
- *Dunkleosteus*, the fish that ate sharks for lunch!

And many other sea-dwelling monsters, past and present.

Each creature is featured with full-color illustrations, size comparisons, skeleton drawings, a fast facts section, and fascinating information about how these creatures lived and died.

This one-of-a-kind book will thrill readers with exciting accounts of those fearsome and marvelous creatures that once ruled the oceans!

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