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Dragon Teeth: A Novel



Synopsis

Michael Crichton, the New York Times best-selling author of Jurassic Park, returns to the world of paleontology in this recently discovered novel - a thrilling adventure set in the Wild West during the golden age of fossil hunting. The year is 1876. Warring Indian tribes still populate America's western territories, even as lawless gold-rush towns begin to mark the landscape. In much of the country, it is still illegal to espouse evolution. Against this backdrop two monomaniacal paleontologists pillage the Wild West, hunting for dinosaur fossils while surveilling, deceiving, and sabotaging each other in a rivalry that will come to be known as the Bone Wars. Into this treacherous territory plunges the arrogant and entitled William Johnson, a Yale student with more privilege than sense. Determined to survive a summer in the west to win a bet against his archrival, William has joined world-renowned paleontologist Othniel Charles Marsh on his latest expedition. But when the paranoid and secretive Marsh becomes convinced that William is spying for his nemesis, Edwin Drinker Cope, he abandons him in Cheyenne, Wyoming, a locus of crime and vice. William is forced to join forces with Cope and soon stumbles upon a discovery of historic proportions. With this extraordinary treasure, however, comes exceptional danger, and William's newfound resilience will be tested in his struggle to protect his cache, which pits him against some of the West's most notorious characters. Drawing on both meticulously researched history and an exuberant imagination, Dragon Teeth is based on the rivalry between real-life paleontologists Cope and Marsh; in William Johnson listeners will find an inspiring hero only Michael Crichton could have imagined. Perfectly paced and brilliantly plotted, this enormously winning adventure is destined to become another Crichton classic.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was surprised that there was no full explanation of how Dr. Crichton, who died in 2008, could be publishing a new book in 2017, with the exception of a brief afterword by his wife. But a little research cleared up the mystery. I learned he had been working, on and off, on this for 15 years before his death. His wife discovered the manuscript when organizing his archives. So while the book is represented as all Crichton, I expect there was some editorial work performed on it before publication. I have read with pleasure and benefit almost all of Crichton's previous novels. From that perspective, I would say this novel is OK but not striking--it certainly is not a page turner that grabs the reader. It is typical Crichton in that he instructs while entertaining. For example, he once again attaches a bibliography of related books for readers interested in pursuing the topic. He also stops the narrative at several places (107; 116; and 153) to explain the context of what is happening, so that the reader can fully appreciate the story. Since paleontology is the setting for the story, these brief explanatory interruptions are quite helpful. Crichton also attaches an author's note and postscript at the end explaining a few things. He also adopts the practice of intermixing real figures with the story's characters. This technique requires real skill and discipline in not overdoing it, and Crichton does not abuse the practice. The two central figures in the novel, aside from the young Yale student narrator, are two real professors of paleontology who during 1876 are competing for the academic title of King of Bones. The prize goes to whomever digs up the most important and numerous fossils, generally drawn from the far west. So almost immediately, in effect, Crichton has shifted the story into almost a conventional western--an area I only previously saw him involved with in "The Great Train Robbery" and indirectly in "Westworld." So we have gunfights, Indian attacks, Deadwood, the U.S. Calvary, dance hall girls, stagecoach attacks, and other trappings of a western story. Yet throughout, Crichton keeps the theme of dino fossils first and foremost. Additional real life characters appear, including Collis Huntington (one of the big four founders of the UP railroad) and especially Wyatt Earp, who had come into prominence during the 15 years Crichton was crafting the novel. So, folks interested in the West and/or paleontology (the title relates to actual fossil dino teeth) should enjoy this book. Its 283 pages pass quickly, and the author thoughtfully has converted the end papers into a detailed map which makes it easy to follow where all the stages of the story occur. It is good to read Crichton once again!

It a fast paced enjoyable read. There are interesting historical trivia about the Indians and the Badlands that make the story interesting. It's not as exciting as Crichton's other books but I couldn't stop reading it. I finished it aa couple of months ago and I already forgot much about the characters

but the way history was woven into it made it well worth a read along with the unusual storyline.

This story of the old west links us to the Jurassic world Michael created later. Character development and plot twists and turns are true Crichton style. Enjoy the lost novel now found.

This puts the vision of the 'true Old West' before our eyes and describes an important time and the temperaments of that age and the rivalry of 'Giants' of the various explorations and exploitations from that era. Sadly, professional rivalries, in paleontology, archaeology, and other sciences continue in our age.

Interesting historical fiction about the discovery of fossils in the US in the days of the early west, with cameos by the Earp boys, among others. Not wholly how it happened, but enough grains of truth to be at least somewhat educational. I enjoyed it, even though it wasn't at all what I expected.

Crichton was a great story tellerAs an amateur paleontologist i have always been interested in the bitter competition between cope and marsh and the great discoveries in the American west. Crichton brings it all to life in a very cleverly told story of adventure, mystery, and science.

This is not a Jurassic Park sequel or prequel.It is an excellent story that reads like a biography of a young man on a fossil hunting expedition in the Badlands of South Dakota during the Indian wars.It is clean (no swearing or descriptions of sexual exploits.A good page Turner based on real characters from the period.

The story is a quick read. The descriptions of the old west towns and characters met by the narrator are colorful and believable.

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