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the University of Rochester International Theatre Program

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Though dinosaurs have fascinated humankind for hundreds of years, the most intriguing and elusive question surrounding the giant lizards is not how they lived; rather, it is why they died. Over the decades, a number of theories have surfaced as to what caused the extinction of the dinosaurs, some of them more plausible than others. Some discarded hypotheses include hay fever from new plants, radiation, and competition from mammals. There are a couple of theories that believe the Biblical Flood caused the dinosaurs to die. Most of these theories have no scientific background and are purely speculative. About the era that saw the dinosaurs wiped out, few facts are relatively certain. First, the climate became permanently cooler and more varied in the Cenozoic era (65 million years ago until the present) than it had been in the Mesozoic era (250 million years—65 million years ago). Second, a drastic increase of dust in the atmosphere caused acid rain, poisonous gases, and a long-term winter. The most likely scientific explanations involve these factors and have lead to the theories of meteorite collision and/or volcanic activity.

One of the more long-standing and most widely accepted theories is the meteorite theory. It is presumed that 65 million years ago, a meteor measuring ten kilometers across crashed into the Earth. The believed point of impact is in the Gulf of Mexico, off the Yucatan peninsula. The force from this crash caused a chain reaction. It produced superheated steam, which rose into the atmosphere and sent enormous vital waves speeding in all directions, ruining coastal areas. It also caused clouds of dust to fill the skies. The dust from the meteorite and the dust from the forest fires ensuing from the meteorites heat blocked out most sunlight. The absence of sunlight resulted in significant plant life being destroyed, robbing the surviving herbivorous dinosaurs of sustenance. Once the plant-eaters died out, the carnivores soon followed, and then the carnivo-eaters. Recently, mathematicians in California studying the orbits of the planets in our solar system noticed that there was a shift in the inner planets’ orbits around the same time that the dinosaurs died out. They believe that these changes may have caused a chain reaction, and along this chain formerly static meteors were made to be thrown off balance, possibly resulting in the meteorite that crashed into the Earth. This line of thinking is an “extrinsic catastrophic” theory (the event involved extraterrestrial bodies and was very sudden, in a geological time view).

Recently, it has been proposed that giant eruptions that lasted for thousands of years were the cause. Called “mantle plumes,” these eruptions were caused by the heat of the mantle (the layer of the Earth between the crust and the core) causing the mantle to expand and flatten out. This, in turn, caused molten magma to erupt over the Earth, resulting in massive changes to the atmosphere and climate. This theory is gaining a strong backing. There is scientific evidence of tectonic plate activity at this time, which is always linked with volcanic activity. Though all of the dinosaurs died out, all life was not extinguished from the Earth. Creatures such as the crocodile, turtle relatives, and early mammals managed to survive. Selective extinction is more characteristic of eruptions than of a huge collision. Many of the scientists who follow the eruption

relations are simply a tedious pack of people, who haven’t got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die.

Oscar Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest

The worst families are those in which the members never speak their minds to one another; they maintain an atmosphere of unreality, and everyone always lives in an atmosphere of suppressed ill-feeling.

Walter Bagehot, The English Constitution

I would rather start a family than finish one.

Don Marquis, humorist

This production was made possible through the combined efforts of Plays in Production (ENG 294), Technical Theatre (ENG 170), and Advanced Technical Theatre (ENG 270).


* This is, once again, not a pterodactyl.

This is a stegosaurus. Sorry.
NICKY SILVER
(Playwright)
His plays include Beautiful Child, Priscilla of Pepperell, The Eros Trilogy, Keating Award, Drama Desk Nomination, Outer Critics Circle Nomination, The Next Step, Raided in Captivity, Drama Desk Nomination, Outer Critics Circle Nomination, Drama Desk Award, The Foehn Chain (Outer Critics Circle Nomination), Fat Men in Skirts, FatbeastTied, The Madrileyn Prayer, Favela Will & Wanton Lust (Helen Hayes Award), My Manesto, Emert Brosing, Theatricals, as well as the new book for the Rogers and Hart musical, The Book of Mormon.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>First cases of AIDS are reported in the United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>The first case of AIDS is reported in a mother-to-child transmission.</td>
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<td>1983</td>
<td>The first case of AIDS is reported in a 13-year-old hemophiliac.</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>The first case of AIDS is reported in a blood donor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>The first case of AIDS is reported in a patient with hemophilia.</td>
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<td>1986</td>
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<td>1987</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>The first case of AIDS is reported in a patient with no known risk factors.</td>
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<td>1989</td>
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For the first time since 1981, it is reported that the number of AIDS deaths in the US has dropped.

Severe side effects to anti-AIDS drugs begin to cast doubt as to the safety of long-term combination therapy.

AIDS vaccine begins by the company Merck.

AIDS is the leading cause of death in the US in people ages 25-29.

Severe side effects to anti-AIDS drugs begin to cast doubt as to the safety of long-term combination therapy.

AIDS vaccine begins by the company Merck.

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AIDS vaccine begins by the company Merck.
Accentuate the positive
Eliminate the negative
Latch on to the affirmative
Don’t mess with Mister In-Between

Man, they said we better
Accentuate the positive
Eliminate the negative
Latch on to the affirmative
Don’t mess with Mister In-Between

You’ve got to spread joy up to the maximum
Bring gloom down to the minimum
Have faith or pandemonium
Liable to walk upon the scene

To illustrate my last remark
Jonah in the whale, Noah in the ark
What did they do
Just when everything looked so dark

Man, they said we better
Accentuate the positive
Eliminate the negative
Latch on to the affirmative
Don’t mess with Mister In-Between

Accentuate the positive
Eliminate the negative
Latch on to the affirmative
Don’t mess with Mister In-Between

And in your lonely flight have you heard the music?
In the night, wonderful music.
Faint as a will-o’-the-wisp, crazy as a loon,
sad as a gypsy serenading the moon.

Oh, skylark, I don’t know I don’t know
If you can find these things, but my heart, my heart is riding on your wings.
So if you see them anywhere won’t you lead me there?

December 27, 1981.

Johnny Mercer was born in Savannah, Georgia in 1909. He worked with big names such as Harold Arlen, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, and Hoagy Carmichael (with whom he co-wrote “Skylark”). He worked in radio, singing with Benny Goodman and had shows of his own, like “Johnny Mercer’s Music Shop.” He wrote or co-wrote over one hundred songs, including “Jeepers Creepers.” “You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby,” “Fools Rush In,” and “Moon River.” The Mercer was president and co-founder of Capitol Records. He died in Los Angeles in 1976.

Pterodactyls were a suborder of the pterosaur order. Pterosaurs were flying reptiles that lived during the Jurassic period (205 million-135 million years ago) and the Cretaceous period (135 million-65 million years ago), but were not dinosaurs. A dinosaur, by definition, is a diapsid (the class to which birds and all reptiles, save turtles, belong) with an upright stance. While pterosaurs are in the diapsid class, it is believed that they only had a semi-upright stance. There were a number of different pterodactyl species. They include the pterodactylus, whose wingspan was between two and a half to three feet wide, the dinoptyrosaurus, with a ten-foot wingspan, and the pterodactylus that had a wingspan of twenty-five feet, and the quetzalcoatlus, boasting a massive forty-foot wingspan. They were carnivorous, and their diets consisted mostly of fish, though some were scavengers. Pterodactyl fossils have been found in Africa, Australia, Europe, and North America.

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Theory believe that the ensuing mass extinctions were of an “intrinsic gradual” nature (meaning that the event was of the Earth and that it took a few million years).

It is unlikely that any one theory will ever be proven to be irrefutably true. There is a great deal of scientific evidence that can be used for and against the argument of any of the above ideas. Whatever the cause, the dinosaurs that ruled the earth for millions of years vanished, and no one knows why, because no one was around.

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