

Sedimentary Geology Prothero

The marine Eocene-Oligocene transition of 34 million years ago was a critical turning point in Earth's climatic history, when the warm, high-diversity "greenhouse" world of the early Eocene ceded to the glacial, "icehouse" conditions of the early Oligocene. This book surveys the advances in stratigraphic and paleontological research and isotopic analysis made since 1989 in regard to marine deposits around the world. In particular, it summarizes the high-resolution details of the so-called doubthouse interval (roughly 45 to 34 million years ago), which is critical to testing climatic and evolutionary hypotheses about the Eocene deterioration. The authors' goals are to discuss the latest information concerning climatic and oceanographic change associated with this transition and to examine geographic and taxonomic patterns in biotic turnover that provide clues about where, when, and how fast these environmental changes happened. They address a range of topics, including the tectonic and paleogeographic setting of the Paleogene; specific issues related to the stratigraphy of shelf deposits; advances in recognizing and correlating boundary sections; trends in the expression of climate change; and patterns of faunal and floral turnover. In the process, they produce a valuable synthesis of patterns of change by latitude and environment.

Every rock is a tangible trace of the earth's past. *The Story of the Earth in 25 Rocks* tells the fascinating stories behind the discoveries that shook the foundations of geology. In twenty-five chapters—each about a particular rock, outcrop, or geologic phenomenon—Donald R. Prothero recounts the scientific detective work that shaped our understanding of geology, from the unearthing of exemplary specimens to tectonic shifts in how we view the inner workings of our

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planet. Prothero follows in the footsteps of the scientists who asked—and answered—geology's biggest questions: How do we know how old the earth is? What happened to the supercontinent Pangea? How did ocean rocks end up at the top of Mount Everest? What can we learn about our planet from meteorites and moon rocks? He answers these questions through expertly chosen case studies, such as Pliny the Younger's firsthand account of the eruption of Vesuvius; the granite outcrops that led a Scottish scientist to theorize that the landscapes he witnessed were far older than Noah's Flood; the salt and gypsum deposits under the Mediterranean Sea that indicate that it was once a desert; and how trying to date the age of meteorites revealed the dangers of lead poisoning. Each of these breakthroughs filled in a piece of the greater puzzle that is the earth, with scientific discoveries dovetailing with each other to offer an increasingly coherent image of the geologic past. Summarizing a wealth of information in an entertaining, approachable style, *The Story of the Earth in 25 Rocks* is essential reading for the armchair geologist, the rock hound, and all who are curious about the earth beneath their feet.

This fully revised and updated edition introduces the reader to sedimentology and stratigraphic principles, and provides tools for the interpretation of sediments and sedimentary rocks. The processes of formation, transport and deposition of sediment are considered and then applied to develop conceptual models for the full range of sedimentary environments, from deserts to deep seas and reefs to rivers. Different approaches to using stratigraphic principles to date and correlate strata are also considered, in order to provide a comprehensive introduction to all aspects of sedimentology and stratigraphy. The text and figures are designed to be accessible to anyone completely new to the subject, and all of the illustrative material is provided in an

accompanying CD-ROM. High-resolution versions of these images can also be downloaded from the companion website for this book at: www.wiley.com/go/nicholssedimentology. California has some of the most distinctive and unique geology in the United States. It is the only state with all three types of plate boundaries, an extraordinary history of earthquakes and volcanoes, and it has many rocks and minerals found nowhere else. The Golden State includes both the highest and lowest point in the continental US and practically every conceivable geological feature known. This book discusses not only the important geologic features of each region in California, but also the complex geologic four-dimensional puzzle of how California was assembled, beginning over 2 billion years ago. The author provides up-to-date and authoritative review of the geology and geomorphology of each geologic province, as well as recent revelations of tectonic history of California's past. There are separate chapters on some of California's distinctive geologic resources, including gold, oil, water, coastlines, and fossils. An introductory section describes basic rock and mineral types and fundamental aspects of plate tectonics, so that students and other readers can make sense of the bizarre, wild, and crazy jigsaw puzzle that is California's geological history.

"Ideas and concepts in sedimentology are changing rapidly, but field work and data collection remain the basis of the science. This book is intended as a guide to the recognition and description of sedimentary rocks in the field. It aims to help students and professional geologists know what to observe and record, and how best to interpret this data. The emphasis is on illustrating the principal types of sedimentary rocks, which is accomplished through more than 450 color photos and explanatory drawings. The introductory chapter defines the main types of sedimentary rocks, their classification, and their economic significance. The author

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then goes on to describe standard field techniques and provides a comprehensive summary of the principal characteristics of sedimentary rocks. Additional chapters cover each of the main rock types and describe how to interpret rocks and their features in terms of depositional environments." "This book is an ideal field companion for undergraduate and graduate students of geology, environmental sciences, hydrogeology, oceanography, and more. Professionals in petroleum geology and resource management, as well as budding geologists, will also find this to be an indispensable reference."--BOOK JACKET.

Developed with extensive community involvement and support from the US National Science Foundation, it is about our planet's dynamic surface, a place where Earth and atmosphere meet and life thrives. Key Concepts in Geomorphology takes an integrative science approach that applies principles of physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics in the understanding of Earth surface processes and the evolution of topography over short and long timescales to solve problems important to people and societies. The authors also hone in on practical applications, showing how scientists are using geomorphological research to tackle critical societal issues (natural disaster response, safer infrastructure, protecting species, and more). A concise introduction to the mineralogy and petrology of igneous and metamorphic rocks for all Earth Science students.

A fascinating study of the thousands of new animal species that walked in the footsteps of the dinosaurs—and the climate changes that brought them forth. The fascinating group of animals called dinosaurs became extinct some 65 million years ago (except for their feathered descendants). In their place evolved an

enormous variety of land creatures, especially mammals, which in their way were every bit as remarkable as their Mesozoic cousins. The Age of Mammals, the Cenozoic Era, has never had its Jurassic Park, but it was an amazing time in earth's history, populated by a wonderful assortment of bizarre animals. The rapid evolution of thousands of species of mammals brought forth many incredible creatures?including our own ancestors. Their story is part of a larger story of new life emerging from the greenhouse conditions of the Mesozoic, warming up dramatically about 55 million years ago, and then cooling rapidly so that 33 million years ago the glacial ice returned. The earth's vegetation went through equally dramatic changes, from tropical jungles in Montana and forests at the poles. Life in the sea underwent striking evolution reflecting global climate change, including the emergence of such creatures as giant sharks, seals, sea lions, dolphins, and whales. Engaging and insightful, *After the Dinosaurs* is a book for everyone who has an abiding fascination with the remarkable life of the past.

This is an ideal textbook for both advanced undergraduates and graduate students. It contains valuable coverage of the optical properties of minerals, as well as up-to-date descriptions of common rock-forming minerals. The chapters on optical theory include discussions of the nature and properties of light, the

petrographic microscope, and the behavior of light in isotropic materials and in uniaxial and biaxial anisotropic materials. Thoroughly revised to include recent developments in the field, the book includes step-by-step procedures to guide students through the determination of all optical properties by which minerals are routinely identified with a petrographic microscope. Readers will find descriptive information on over 125 common rock forming minerals, and many photomicrographs and illustrations. The book also includes a flow sheet to guide students through the process of identifying an unknown mineral.

Presents arguments for and against the existence of five notable cryptids and challenges the pseudoscience that furthers their legendary statuses, while providing an exploration of the nature and subculture of cryptozoology.

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"'The Evolving Earth' is a higher education geology textbook, aiming to teach evolution to non-majors. The book will emphasize popular topics such as dinosaurs, mass extinctions, ice ages, climate change, and the origins of Earth

and life"--

A book for everyone fascinated by the huge beasts that once roamed the earth, *Rhinoceros Giants: The Paleobiology of the Indricotheres* introduces a prime candidate for the largest land mammal that ever lived--the giant hornless rhinoceros, *Indricotherium*. These massive animals lived in Asia and Eurasia for more than 14 million years, about 37 to 23 million years ago. They had skulls 2 metres / 6 feet long, stood over 7 meters / 22 feet high at the shoulder, and were nearly twice as heavy as the largest elephant ever recorded, tipping the scales at 20,000 kg / 44,100 pounds. Fortunately, the big brutes were vegetarians, although they must have made predators think twice before trying to bring them down. In this book for lovers of ancient creatures great and small, Donald R. Prothero tells their story, from their discovery by palaeontologists just a century ago to the latest research on how they lived and died, with some interesting side trips along the way.

Key concepts in mineralogy and petrology are explained alongside beautiful full-color illustrations, in this concisely written textbook.

Written for a first course in sedimentary geology or sedimentary rocks and stratigraphy (with only an introductory geology/physical geology course as a prerequisite), Prothero and Schwab shows students how sedimentary strata

serves geologists as a continuous record of Earth's history. The authors' conversational style, and focus on the important concepts make the book highly accessible to an undergraduate audience.

Donald R. Prothero's science books combine leading research with first-person narratives of discovery, injecting warmth and familiarity into a profession that has much to offer nonspecialists. Bringing his trademark style and wit to an increasingly relevant subject of concern, Prothero links the climate changes that have occurred over the past 200 million years to their effects on plants and animals. In particular, he contrasts the extinctions that ended the Cretaceous period, which wiped out the dinosaurs, with those of the later Eocene and Oligocene epochs. Prothero begins with the "greenhouse of the dinosaurs," the global-warming episode that dominated the Age of Dinosaurs and the early Age of Mammals. He describes the remarkable creatures that once populated the earth and draws on his experiences collecting fossils in the Big Badlands of South Dakota to sketch their world. Prothero then discusses the growth of the first Antarctic glaciers, which marked the Eocene-Oligocene transition, and shares his own anecdotes of excavations and controversies among colleagues that have shaped our understanding of the contemporary and prehistoric world. The volume concludes with observations about Nisqually Glacier and other

locations that show how global warming is happening much quicker than previously predicted, irrevocably changing the balance of the earth's thermostat. Engaging scientists and general readers alike, *Greenhouse of the Dinosaurs* connects events across thousands of millennia to make clear the human threat to natural climate change.

The first vertebrate animals appear in the fossil record over 520 million years ago. These lineages diversified and eventually crept ashore leading to further evolutionary divergence and the appearance of the familiar charismatic vertebrates of today. From the tiniest fishes, diminutive salamanders, and miniaturized lizards to gargantuan dinosaurs, enormous brontotheres, and immense whales, vertebrates have captured the imagination of the lay public as well as the most erudite academics. They are the among the best studied organisms. This book employs beautifully rendered illustrations of these diverse lineages along with informative text to document a rich evolutionary history. The prolific and best-selling author reveals much of the latest findings regarding the phylogenetic history of vertebrates without overwhelming the reader with pedantry and excessive jargon. Simultaneously, comprehensive and authoritative while being approachable and lucid, this book should appeal to both the scholar, the student, and the fossil enthusiast. **Key Features** Provides an up-to-date

account of evolution of vertebrates Includes numerous beautiful color reconstructions of prehistoric vertebrates Describes extinct vertebrates and their evolutionary history Discusses and illustrates the first vertebrates, as well as familiar lineages of fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals Reviews mass extinctions and other important events in the diversification of vertebrates Related Titles Schweitzer, M. H., et al. Dinosaurs: How We know What We Know (ISBN 9780367563813) Bard, J. Evolution: The Origins and Mechanisms of Diversity (ISBN 9780367357016) Böhmer, C., et al. Atlas of Terrestrial Mammal Limbs (ISBN 9781138705906) Diogo, R., et al. Muscles of Chordates: Development, Homologies, and Evolution (ISBN 9781138571167).

Aliens. Ley lines. Water dowsing. Conspiracies and myths captivate imaginations and promise mystery and magic. Whether it's arguing about the moon landing hoax or a Frisbee-like Earth drifting through space, when held up to science and critical thinking, these ideas fall flat. In *Weird Earth: Debunking Strange Ideas About Our Planet*, Donald R. Prothero demystifies these conspiracies and offers answers to some of humanity's most outlandish questions. Applying his extensive scientific knowledge, Prothero corrects misinformation that con artists and quacks use to hoodwink others about geology--hollow earth, expanding earth, and bizarre earthquakes--and mystical and paranormal happenings--healing

crystals, alien landings, and the gates of hell. By deconstructing wild claims such as prophecies of imminent natural disasters, Prothero provides a way for everyone to recognize dubious assertions. Prothero answers these claims with facts, offering historical and scientific context in a light-hearted manner that is accessible to everyone, no matter their background. With a careful layering of evidence in geology, archaeology, and biblical and historical records, Prothero's *Weird Earth* examines each conspiracy and myth and leaves no question unanswered.

This Third Edition of *Elements of Petroleum Geology* is completely updated and revised to reflect the vast changes in the field since publication of the Second Edition. This book is a useful primer for geophysicists, geologists, and petroleum engineers in the oil industry who wish to expand their knowledge beyond their specialized area. It is also an excellent introductory text for a university course in petroleum geoscience. *Elements of Petroleum Geology* begins with an account of the physical and chemical properties of petroleum, reviewing methods of petroleum exploration and production. These methods include drilling, geophysical exploration techniques, wireline logging, and subsurface geological mapping. After describing the temperatures and pressures of the subsurface environment and the hydrodynamics of connate fluids, Selley examines the

generation and migration of petroleum, reservoir rocks and trapping mechanisms, and the habit of petroleum in sedimentary basins. The book contains an account of the composition and formation of tar sands and oil shales, and concludes with a brief review of prospect risk analysis, reserve estimation, and other economic topics. Updates the Second Edition completely Reviews the concepts and methodology of petroleum exploration and production Written by a preeminent petroleum geologist and sedimentologist with decades of petroleum exploration in remote corners of the world Contains information pertinent to geophysicists, geologists, and petroleum reservoir engineers Updated statistics throughout Additional figures to illustrate key points and new developments New information on drilling activity and production methods including crude oil, directional drilling, thermal techniques, and gas plays Added coverage of 3D seismic interpretation New section on pressure compartments New section on hydrocarbon adsorption and absorption in source rocks Coverage of The Orinoco Heavy Oil Belt of Venezuela Updated chapter on unconventional petroleum

This is an accessible introductory text which encompasses both sedimentary rocks and stratigraphy. The book utilizes current research in tectonics and sedimentation and focuses on crucial geological principles. It covers a wide range of topics, including trace fossils, mudrocks and diagenetic structures.

Today, any kid can rattle off the names of dozens of dinosaurs. But it took centuries of scientific effort—and a lot of luck—to discover and establish the diversity of dinosaur species we now know. How did we learn that Triceratops had three horns? Why don't many paleontologists consider Brontosaurus a valid species? What convinced scientists that modern birds are relatives of ancient Velociraptor? In *The Story of the Dinosaurs in 25 Discoveries*, Donald R. Prothero tells the fascinating stories behind the most important fossil finds and the intrepid researchers who unearthed them. In twenty-five vivid vignettes, he weaves together dramatic tales of dinosaur discoveries with what modern science now knows about the species to which they belong. Prothero takes us from eighteenth-century sightings of colossal bones taken for biblical giants through recent discoveries of enormous predators even larger than Tyrannosaurus. He recounts the escapades of the larger-than-life personalities who made modern paleontology, including scientific rivalries like the nineteenth-century "Bone Wars." Prothero also details how to draw the boundaries between species and explores debates such as whether dinosaurs had feathers, explaining the findings that settled them or keep them going. Throughout, he offers a clear and rigorous look at what paleontologists consider sound interpretation of evidence. An essential read for any dinosaur lover, this book

teaches us to see an ancient world ruled by giant majestic creatures anew. Sedimentology is a core discipline of earth and environmental sciences. It enquires the origins, transport and deposition of mineral sediment on the Earth's surface. The subject is a link between positive effects arising from the building of relief by tectonics and the negative action of denudation in drainage catchments and tectonic subsidence in sedimentary basins. The author addresses the principles of the subject, emphasising the advantages of a general science approach and the importance of understanding modern processes.

Sedimentology and Sedimentary Basins is not an encyclopaedia, but attempts to stimulate interdisciplinary thought across the whole subject area and related disciplines. The book has been designed to meet the needs of earth and environmental science undergraduates.

Donald R. Prothero's *Evolution* is an entertaining and rigorous history of the transitional forms and series found in the fossil record. Its engaging narrative of scientific discovery and well-grounded analysis has led to the book's widespread adoption in courses that teach the nature and value of fossil evidence for evolution. *Evolution* tackles systematics and cladistics, rock dating, neo-Darwinism, and macroevolution. It includes extensive coverage of the primordial soup, invertebrate transitions, the development of the backbone, the reign of the

dinosaurs, and the transformation from early hominid to modern human. The book also details the many alleged “missing links” in the fossil record, including some of the most recent discoveries that flesh out the fossil timeline and the evolutionary process. In this second edition, Prothero describes new transitional fossils from various periods, vividly depicting such bizarre creatures as the *Odontochelys*, or the “turtle on the half shell”; fossil snakes with legs; and the “Frogamander,” a new example of amphibian transition. Prothero’s discussion of intelligent design arguments includes more historical examples and careful examination of the “experiments” and observations that are exploited by creationists seeking to undermine sound science education. With new perspectives, Prothero reframes creationism as a case study in denialism and pseudoscience rather than a field with its own intellectual dynamism. The first edition was hailed as an exemplary exploration of the fossil evidence for evolution, and this second edition will be welcome in the libraries of scholars, teachers, and general readers who stand up for sound science in this post-truth era.

The fascinating true story of the explosion of the Mount Toba supervolcano--the Earth's largest eruption in the past 28 million years--and its lasting impact on Earth and human evolution Some 73,000 years ago, the huge dome of Mount

Toba, in today's Sumatra, Indonesia, began to rumble. A deep vibration shook the entire island. Jets of steam and ash emanated from the summit, followed by an explosion louder than any sound heard by Homo sapiens since our species evolved on Earth. The eruption of the Toba supervolcano released the energy of a million tons of explosives; seven hundred cubic miles of magma spewed outward in an explosion forty times larger than the largest hydrogen bomb and more than a thousand times as powerful as the Krakatau eruption in 1883. So much ash and debris was injected into the stratosphere that it partially blocked the sun's radiation and caused global temperatures to drop by five to nine degrees. It took a full decade for Earth to recover to its pre-eruption temperatures. When *Humans Nearly Vanished* presents the controversial argument that the Toba catastrophe nearly wiped out the human race, leaving only about a thousand to ten thousand breeding pairs of humans worldwide. Human genes today show evidence of a "genetic bottleneck," an effect seen when a population of organisms becomes so small that their genetic diversity is greatly reduced. This group of survivors could be the ancestors of all humans alive today. Donald R. Prothero explores the geological and biological evidence supporting the Toba bottleneck theory; reveals how the explosion itself was discovered; and offers insight into how the world changed afterward and what

might happen if such an eruption occurred today. Prothero's riveting account of this calamitous supervolcanic explosion is not to be missed.

One of the leading textbooks in its field, *Bringing Fossils to Life* applies paleobiological principles to the fossil record while detailing the evolutionary history of major plant and animal phyla. It incorporates current research from biology, ecology, and population genetics, bridging the gap between purely theoretical paleobiological textbooks and those that describe only invertebrate paleobiology and that emphasize cataloguing live organisms instead of dead objects. For this third edition Donald R. Prothero has revised the art and research throughout, expanding the coverage of invertebrates and adding a discussion of new methodologies and a chapter on the origin and early evolution of life.

Aimed at advanced undergraduates but suitable also for graduate students and professionals, it covers processes of sedimentation, describes the characteristics of sedimentary rocks formed in major sedimentary environments, and discusses the fundamental principles of stratigraphy and basin analysis, including recent developments in the important fields of magnetostratigraphy, seismic stratigraphy, sequence stratigraphy, isotope stratigraphy, and sea-level analysis. The book presents divergent views on controversial topics and is extensively referenced and up-to-date thus encouraging students to refer to recently

published literature.

This concise text covers field techniques, identification of rock types and sediment characteristics, plus preliminary interpretation and is designed for use in the field or laboratory.

This book, dedicated to carbonate rocks, approaches sequence stratigraphy from its sedimentologic background. It attempts to communicate by combining different specialities and different lines of reasoning, and by searching for principles underlying the bewildering diversity of carbonate rocks. It provides enough general background, in introductory chapters and appendices, to be easily digestible for sedimentologists and stratigraphers as well as earth scientists at large.

The ultimate illustrated guide to the lost world of prehistoric mammals After the mass extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, mammals became the dominant terrestrial life form on our planet. Roaming the earth were spectacular beasts such as saber-toothed cats, giant mastodons, immense ground sloths, and gigantic giraffe-like rhinoceroses. Here is the ultimate illustrated field guide to the lost world of these weird and wonderful prehistoric creatures. A woolly mammoth probably won't come thundering through your vegetable garden any time soon. But if one did, this would be the book to keep on your windowsill next to the binoculars. It covers all the main groups of fossil mammals, discussing taxonomy and evolutionary history, and providing concise accounts of the better-known genera and species

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as well as an up-to-date family tree for each group. No other book presents such a wealth of new information about these animals—what they looked like, how they behaved, and how they were interrelated. In addition, this unique guide is stunningly illustrated throughout with full-color reconstructions of these beasts—many never before depicted—along with photographs of amazing fossils from around the world. Provides an up-to-date guidebook to hundreds of extinct species, from saber-toothed cats to giant mammoths Features a wealth of color illustrations, including new reconstructions of many animals never before depicted Demonstrates evolution in action—such as how whales evolved from hooved mammals and how giraffes evolved from creatures with short necks Explains how mass extinctions and climate change affected mammals, including why some mammals grew so huge 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

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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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Sedimentary Geology Macmillan Higher Education

Relates the physical and geometric elegance of geologic structures within the Earth's crust and the ways in which these structures reflect the nature and origin of crystal deformation through time. The main thrust is on applications in regional tectonics, exploration geology, active tectonics and geohydrology. Techniques, experiments, and calculations are described in detail, with the purpose of offering active participation and discovery through laboratory and field work.

The theory of evolution unites the past, present, and future of living things. It puts humanity's place in the universe into necessary perspective. Despite a history of controversy, the evidence for evolution continues to accumulate as a result of many separate strands of amazing scientific sleuthing. In *The Story of Evolution in 25 Discoveries*, Donald R. Prothero explores the most fascinating breakthroughs in piecing together the evidence for evolution. In

twenty-five vignettes, he recounts the dramatic stories of the people who made crucial discoveries, placing each moment in the context of what it represented for the progress of science. He tackles topics like what it means to see evolution in action and what the many transitional fossils show us about evolution, following figures from Darwin to lesser-known researchers as they unlock the mysteries of the fossil record, the earth, and the universe. The book also features the stories of animal species strange and familiar, including humans—and our ties to some of our closest relatives and more distant cousins. Prothero's wide-ranging tales showcase awe-inspiring and bizarre aspects of nature and the powerful insights they give us into the way that life works. Brisk and entertaining while firmly grounded in fundamental science, *The Story of Evolution in 25 Discoveries* is a captivating read for anyone curious about the evidence for evolution and what it means for humanity.

UFOs. Aliens. Strange crop circles. Giant figures scratched in the desert surface along the coast of Peru. The amazing alignment of the pyramids. Strange lines of clouds in the sky. The paranormal is alive and well in the American cultural landscape. In *UFOs, Chemtrails, and Aliens*, Donald R. Prothero and Tim Callahan explore why such demonstrably false beliefs thrive despite decades of education and scientific debunking. Employing the ground rules of science and the standards of scientific evidence, Prothero and Callahan discuss a wide range of topics including the reliability of eyewitness testimony, psychological research into why people want to believe in aliens and UFOs, and the role conspiratorial thinking plays in UFO culture. They examine a variety of UFO sightings and describe the standards of evidence used to determine whether UFOs are actual alien spacecraft. Finally, they consider our views of aliens and the strong cultural signals that provide the shapes and behaviors of these beings.

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While their approach is firmly based in science, Prothero and Callahan also share their personal experiences of Area 51, Roswell, and other legendary sites, creating a narrative that is sure to engross both skeptics and believers.

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