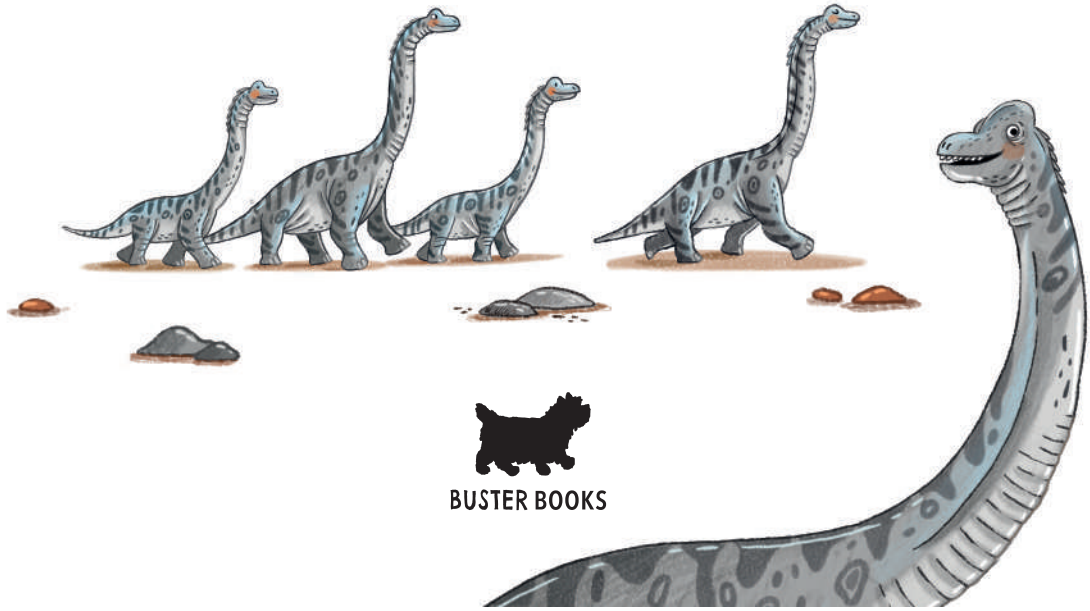


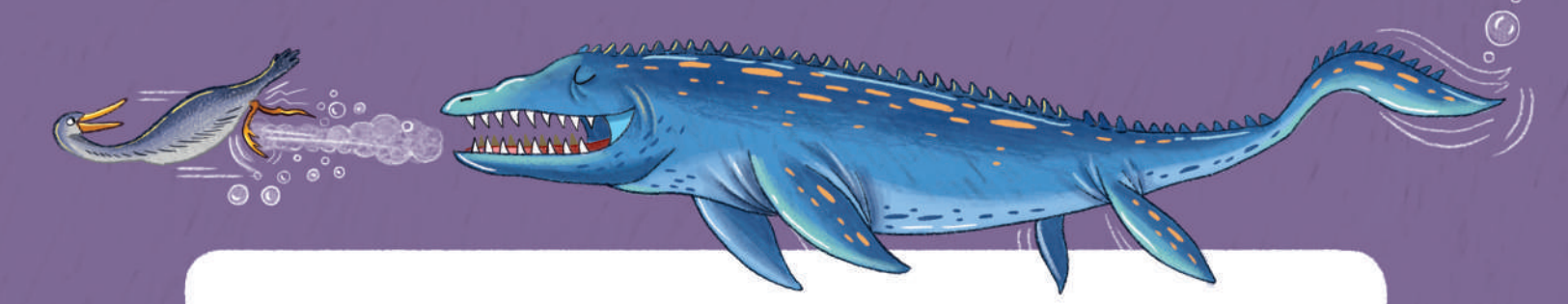


THE WILD LIFE OF DINOSAURS

AND OTHER PREHISTORIC ANIMALS



BUSTER BOOKS



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For Jake, with apologies for not having written this earlier! MB

For Sami, so that he never ceases to be amazed
by the great, diverse and strange planet we live on. PB

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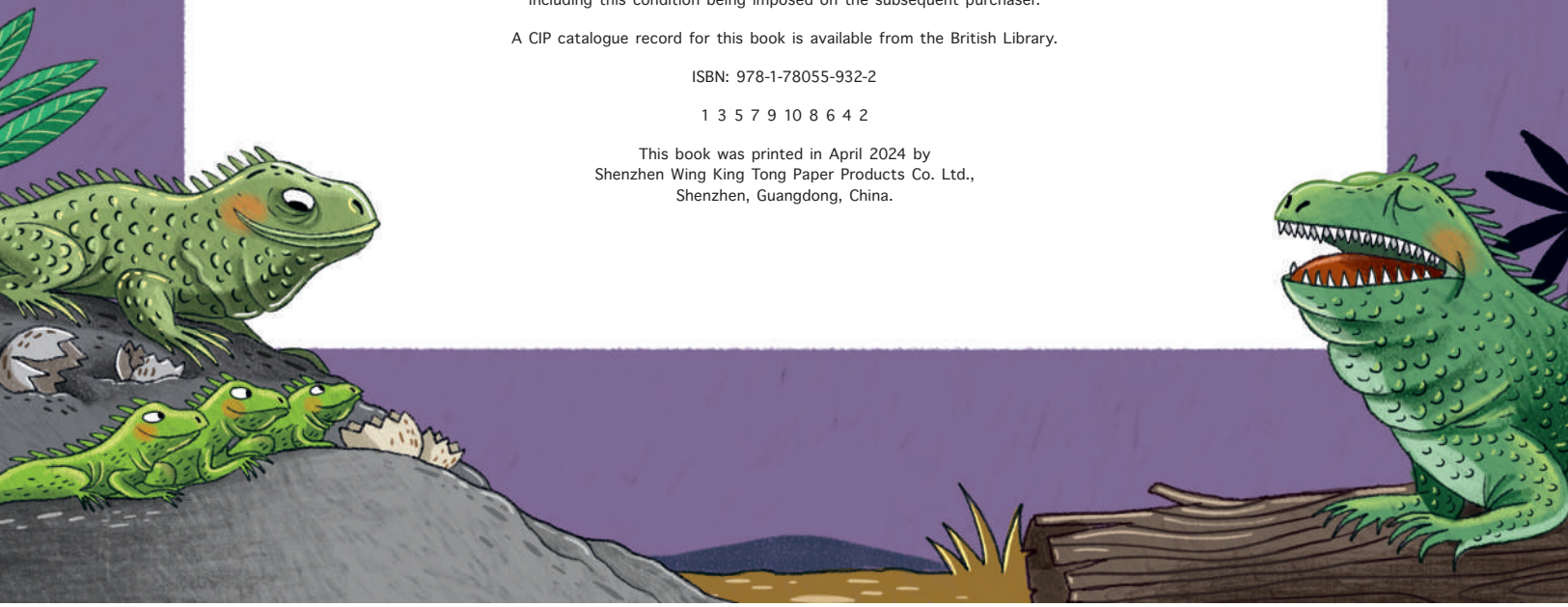
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ILLUSTRATED BY PAULA BOSSIO



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INTRODUCTION

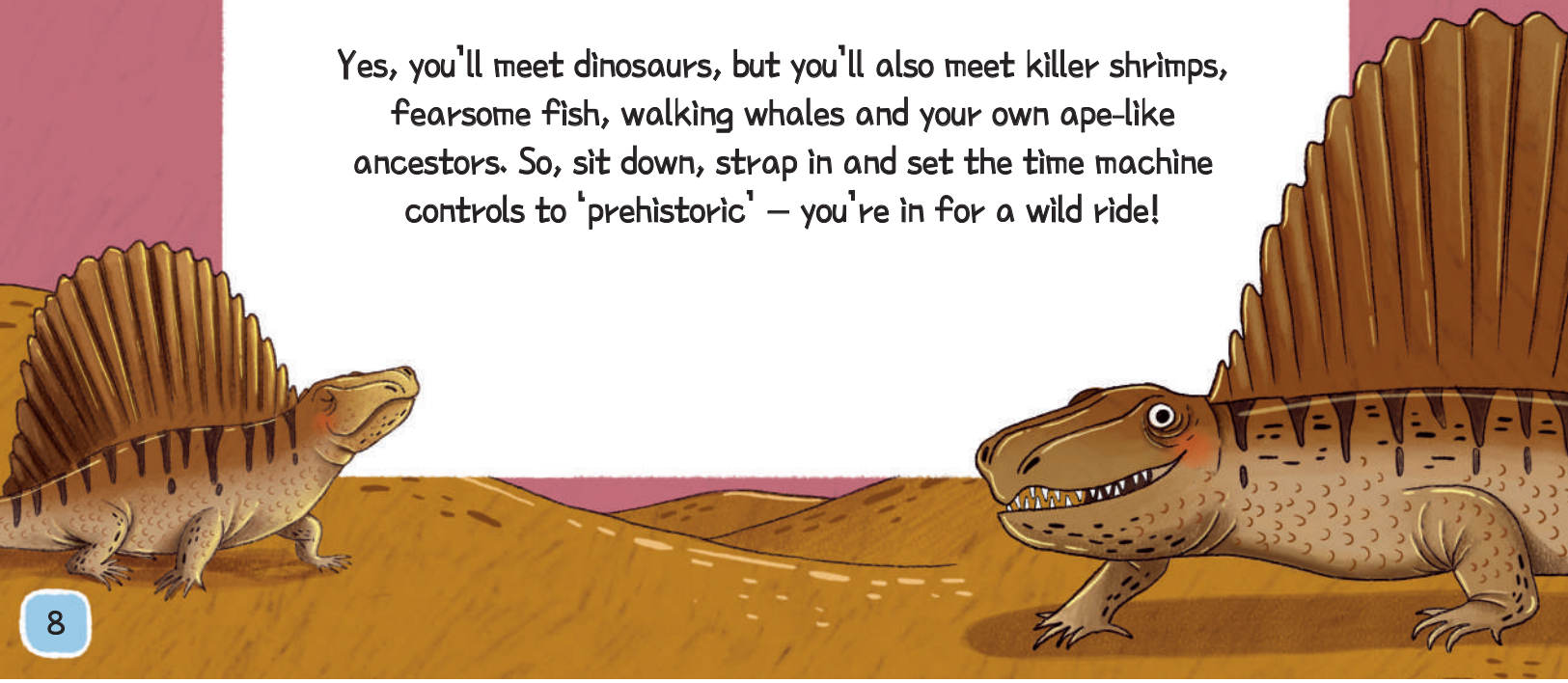
This isn't just a book – it's a time machine! Dip into the pages that follow and you'll travel back hundreds of millions of years to meet many of Earth's previous occupants.

'Prehistoric' means from a time before people were able to record or write things down. Before humans came along, there were all manner of weird and wonderful animals that we now know only from fossils – rocky clues that scientists use to picture the past.

Scientists are able to use fossils to guess at how prehistoric animals lived. However, many of these animals' characteristics and behaviours remain shrouded in mystery.

This book uses the best information available to bring some of those amazing animals back to life and tell their stories. Alongside those stories are 'Dead Cool' guides, catching up with additional early animals, and 'Living Legends' pages, highlighting the ancient species that are still with us today.

Yes, you'll meet dinosaurs, but you'll also meet killer shrimps, fearsome fish, walking whales and your own ape-like ancestors. So, sit down, strap in and set the time machine controls to 'prehistoric' – you're in for a wild ride!



ENTER THE ANIMALS: PALEOZOIC ERA

Life began on Earth about four billion years ago. No one is sure how it started, but it took billions of years to evolve from tiny microbes into complex animals.

This chapter presents some of Mother Nature's earliest experiments. Like many experiments, some went wrong and animals died out in a process known as 'extinction'.

Scientists are able to date fossils by looking at the rocks they are found in. Animals first appeared in the sea, in a distant time period called the Precambrian. A mere 200 million years later, Earth's early animals had taken their first steps on land.

Get ready to meet some of your very oldest relatives!

PERIODS AND ERAS

Periods are grouped together into longer stretches of time called 'eras'. Throughout this book, you can find out what period you're reading about by checking the top corner of the page. To see how all the different periods and eras flow together, take a look at the timeline on page 94.

CHARNIA

600 million years ago, it was a very watery world ...

Hi! We're a pair of *Charnia*, just wafting around down here on the ocean floor.

WAFT!

WAFT!

COOL! BUT ... UM ... WHAT ACTUALLY ARE WE?

Because we're stuck in the seabed, we look more like plants than animals.

WE DO!

WAFT!

Shh! I'm explaining!

SORRY!

WAFT!

You see, plants need light to survive ...

WAFT!

... but it's too dark for them down here.

AMATEURS!

Millions of years from now, in the future, humans will find fossils of our soft forms and call us *Charnia*.

FOSSIL

WHAT'S A HUMAN?

WAFT!

Humans are animals who aren't around yet. They reckon we might be the leading animals in the world right now.

COOL!

WAFT!

LOOK OUT! JELLYFISH COMING THROUGH!

DICKINSONIA ON THE MOVE!

WIGGLY WORM ALERT!

Pff! Show-offs.

UM ...

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT US BEING LEADING ANIMALS?

For the last time ... SHHHH!

JELLYFISH

YO, COUSIN!

DO I KNOW YOU?

HI! I'm a jellyfish – one of the few really early animals to have survived into modern times. Although we do contain a type of jelly, we're NOT ACTUALLY FISH. Instead, we're related to sponges and sea anemones.

SEA ANEMONES

WHAT KEPT YOU?

'SEA JELLIES' is a better name. Our ancestors first appeared 600 MILLION YEARS AGO. That's about 100 million years before fish.

SLOWCOACH!

HUMPH!

PULSE!

We may have been the first animals to move using muscles. We swim along by PULSING our bodies.

We can also SQUIRT water to propel ourselves away from danger!

ANY WAY UP IS FINE!

WHEEEEE!

Because of our SOFT BODIES, the first sea jellies left very few fossils behind. But we've barely changed in all these years. We even still EAT AND POO through the same single hole in our bodies.

DON'T MENTION THE POO THING! EMBARRASSING!

SQUIRT!

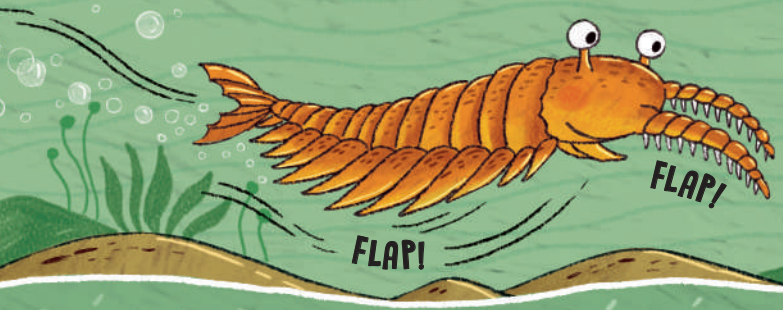
I'M OUTTA HERE!

SQUIRT!

CAMBRIAN

ANOMALOCARIS

520 million years ago, in the ocean ...



Hi! I'm an ancient animal called *Anomalocaris*.

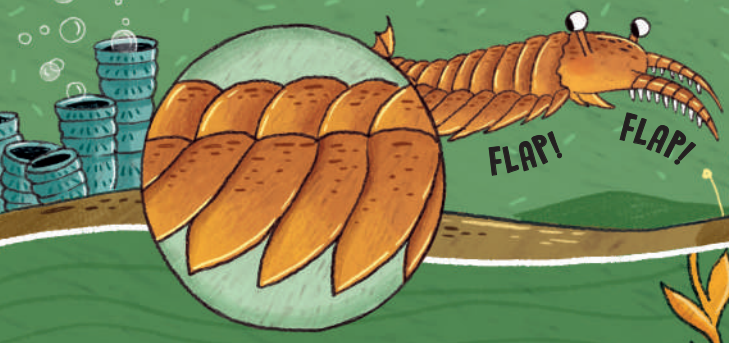


It's not a very flattering name, because it means 'strange shrimp'.

Seriously, who are they calling a 'shrimp'? I'm over a metre long and I'm the biggest predator on the planet right now.



I swim along by rippling the bits of my body called 'lobes'.



I put smaller animals into a flap, too!



My secret weapon is a recent animal invention – eyes. Look how big mine are!



My eyesight is almost as sharp as the spines on my 'arms'!

