

Childhood joy

Description

When I was a child, I started reading later than most kids (or so my parents tell me).

From what they say, it wasn't that I found it difficult, just that I did not feel like I needed to. They tried to engage me with a variety of books, and I'd do it for a while, but quickly get bored.

Then, they found some books that interested me: dinosaurs.

I took to reading about dinosaurs like nothing else. I read everything I could get my hands on, from children's books with more pictures than words, to big anthologies with printing I had to squint to read.

I was so ravenous for information, that my twin brother and I would beg our parents to take us to our local museum (the Royal Ontario Museum or ROM) to see the dinosaur skeletons. But, there was a catch – to see the dinosaurs, you had to go through an area known as “the bat cave” which had nothing to do with Batman.

The cave was a S-shaped dark tunnel that featured real and fake bats on display, and I was terrified, because what young child is not afraid of the dark? I would cover my eyes and ears and walk through as fast as I could to reach the terrible lizards.

Seeing the Tyrannosaurus Rex was always a highlight of the trip, as it was considered the “bad boy” of the dinosaur world. Who would mess with something that had teeth the size of steak knives?

But, as much as meat eaters were fun to look at and imagine having as a pet, I was always drawn to the herbivores more. I am not quite sure why, but maybe it was because that in the evolutionary arms race, they had to protect, as opposed to destroy.

Everyone has his or her list of favourite dinosaurs, and I was no exception. I would tell everyone I knew about Stegosaurus with the golf ball-sized brain, the intimidating-looking Ankylosaurus and Dimetrodon, with its trademark sail.

I was so obsessed with dinosaurs that my brother and I would check books out from our school library over and over again, as we just couldn't get enough of the information and pictures! We checked them out so much, that when our librarian retired, she donated those two most checked-out books to us.

The obsession went even beyond that.

During our countless trips to the ROM, my brother and I would correct the tour guides on pronunciation of nomenclature, locations where the bones were found, the time frame and more. I almost feel bad for the tour guides, but they should have known that stuff, right?

Not surprisingly, my first “dream” job was to be a paleontologist and travel all over the world discovering new dinosaur species.

Honestly, how good would a dinosaur that was named “Manly” be?

Over the years, though, as I got older, that dream slowly faded. But the enthusiasm and passion still remains.

And yet, whenever I visit a museum, I always make a point to visit the dinosaurs and just marvel at them. I enjoy watching the kids staring at them in wonder, listening to the tour guides explain who is who, but most of all, I love remembering a long-forgotten fact and sharing it with a child. Because you know the first thing they will do is go back to their parent/guardian and ask if they knew that “!” and if they didn’t, that’s a great joy for a child to experience.

I still love learning about dinosaurs and staring at them with wonder and a huge smile on my face. I still get excited if I see a Stegosaur, Dimetrodon or T. Rex.

I still love them to this day, as that kind of fervent passion never dies “ it always stays with you.

So, don’t be ashamed of a passion you still carry with you from when you were younger. Whether it is comic books, video games, magic tricks or a love of prehistoric animals, they are amazing and help make up the beautiful mosaic that is you.

Category

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Date Created

January 13, 2012

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