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[21158018]

By making clever inferences about how the squashed and distorted fossil remains corresponded to three-dimensional structures, this trio was able to piece together a series of wondrous beasts quite unlike anything currently on the planet

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One was so fantastic in appearance , it was dubbed Hallucigenia .

[21] [58021]

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These turns do not provide sufficient relief from sentences like , " Most modern chelicerates have six unanimous appendages on the prosoma

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Interest picks up , though , when Mr. Gould gets around to discussing the meaning of the Burgess oddities for the theory of evolution .

[21]580[24]

Not long after the appearance of life, evidently, there was an explosive proliferation in the number of animal designs seen on the earth.

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The vast majority of them , however , were wiped out by a succession of environmental upheavals that were too sudden and catastrophic for the normal rules of natural selection to operate .

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So much, too, for the notion that we humans triumphed in the Darwinian struggle by evolving big brains.

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Our mammalian forerunners lucked out through the extraterrestrial impact that did in the dinosaurs because they were small, not smart.

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If anyone has difficulty imagining a world in which history went merrily on without us, Mr. Gould sketches several .

[21] 38051]

in one, birds are the dominant carnivores ; in another the seas abound with " little penises . "

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