

COVER
NOT FINAL

Join an intrepid paleontologist
on her journey through the...

DINOSAUR

DESERT



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By 1945, the terrible war in Europe was finally over. After five years of oppression, Germany and the Axis powers had been defeated.



As the Nazis began to lose the war, they had scattered, running from the cities they had captured. But Warsaw was different. Hitler was determined to destroy the city following the Warsaw Uprising. So, at the end of 1944, as the Nazis' defeat across Europe seemed certain, they left the already wounded city, but then turned their weapons back on it.



They set fire to churches and smashed down schools, demolished museums and stole from art galleries. They shot, and crushed, tore and toppled and in just a few months, Warsaw, Zofia's beautiful home, was almost wiped from the face of the Earth.

Zofia walked back to the remains of her city, but in Żoliborz she found her beautiful home had been destroyed. Almost nothing had survived except, incredibly, her bicycle.



She peddled through the ghostly city. Street after street lay ruined but, to her surprise, she discovered that the Museum of Zoology was still – just about – standing.



Sharing space with the museum's homeless curators and volunteers, Zofia slept among the bottles of collected animals and drawers of fossils, a refuge built from knowledge. Reading book after book from the surviving library, slowly, Zofia the Rebel was able to be just Zofia, learning about the natural world that had all the time been there around her, but hidden by the noise of war.

Her time spent among the curators and specimens of the museum had convinced her: Zofia would study biology at her city's university. But the university had barely any buildings still standing: its classrooms had been levelled, its libraries lay in ruins.



Instead, Zofia was taught wherever her teachers could find space. It was in one such place, in the apartment of Professor Kozlowski on Wilcza Street, where her life changed forever.

Professor Kozlowski stood behind his table and drew on his blackboard, speaking quickly as he taught Zofia's small class about the countless species that had lived throughout the history of life on Earth.

And it was in this room, in this small apartment, that Zofia learned about the daring expeditions of Roy Chapman Andrews, twenty years ago.



How the American and his team had braved bandits and sandstorms in the vast Gobi Desert on their mission to find dinosaur bones...

About dangers of working in the desert, about the wonderful people they had encountered, and the dinosaur eggs and mammal skulls they had prised from the sandy rocks of Bayn Dzak.



Zofia was entranced.



Velociraptor

Where the Gobi Desert now stretched – cold, barren, inhospitable – had once been a bustling, ancient shoreline. In her mind, Zofia waded in freshwater rivers and explored the conifer forests, rich with the scents of the Earth's first flowers. The humid air thick with the chatter of insects overhead, while the shadows of dinosaurs passed between the trees and her mammal ancestors scamped underfoot.



Alioramur



Saurodophus



Zalamdalestes



Deltatheridium

Where there was nothing, there had once been everything.

Zofia knew that they could bring all the finest equipment, the newest tools and the biggest trucks, but the most important thing they could take with them couldn't be packed in a box. If she didn't understand the country she was visiting, they would have no hope of finding their way out of the airport, let alone finding fossils. So, in the months before she left, Zofia invited two of Mongolia's finest palaeontologists, Naydn Douchin and Demberljin Dashzeveg, to brave the Polish winter with her in Warsaw.



They spoke for days together about their country, about its history – not only of dinosaurs, but of the ancient Xiongnu empire, Buddhist monks, and Ghengis Khan.

Hello: Сайнуу

My truck has broken down:
МИНИЙ АЧААНЫ МАШИН ЭВЭЭРСЭН



Zofia knew how lucky she was that these experts would be leading them through their country and into their desert, and she only hoped they could provide them with something in return.

The winter passed and soon it was time for Zofia to leave. With a head full of facts, and a chest full of excitement, she walked onboard the plane that would carry her, finally, to the desert.

