



Bug Club

This is your free
sample of **Death of the
Dinosaurs.**



DEATH OF THE *Dinosaurs*

Written by Herbie Brennan

Illustrated by Chris Brown and Roger Simó



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Introduction

Dinosaurs first appeared on Earth more than 250 million years ago. For most of that time these enormous animals roamed throughout the world.

They were the kings of this planet. Humans, who appeared much later, are just four million years old at the most.

Dinosaurs had no natural enemies. Yet, 65 million years ago, they disappeared.

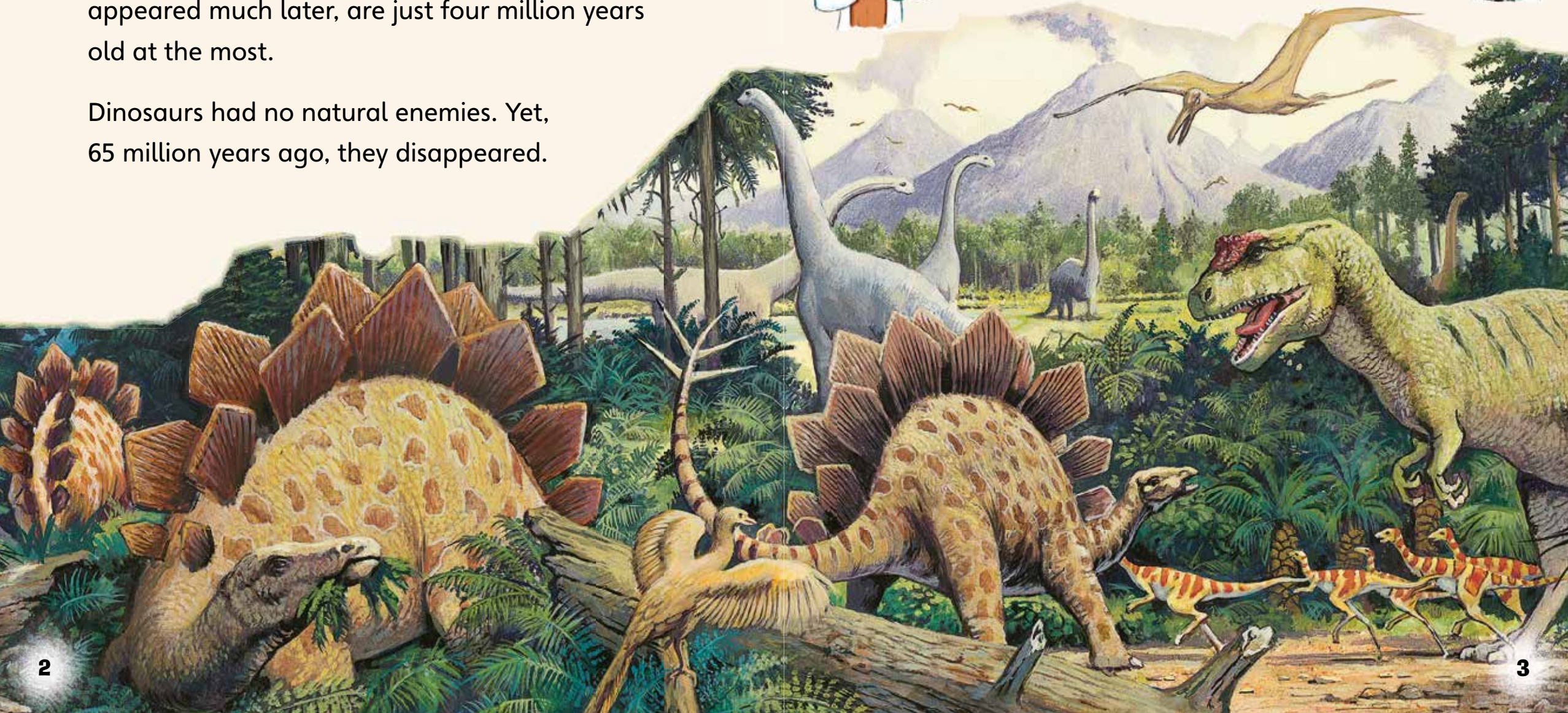
The big question is *why?*

There are two main theories about what happened to the dinosaurs. Scientists have been arguing about theories for years.



Theory One:
**The Great
Disaster Theory**

Theory Two:
**The Slow
Death Theory**



Theory One:

The Great Disaster Theory

This is what some scientists believe:

A giant lump of rock, or **meteor**, from outer space crashed into Earth about 65 million years ago.



The crash was so violent that it left a huge dent (called a **crater**) on the surface of Earth.

When something like that happens, huge amounts of dirt and dust are thrown high up into the air.

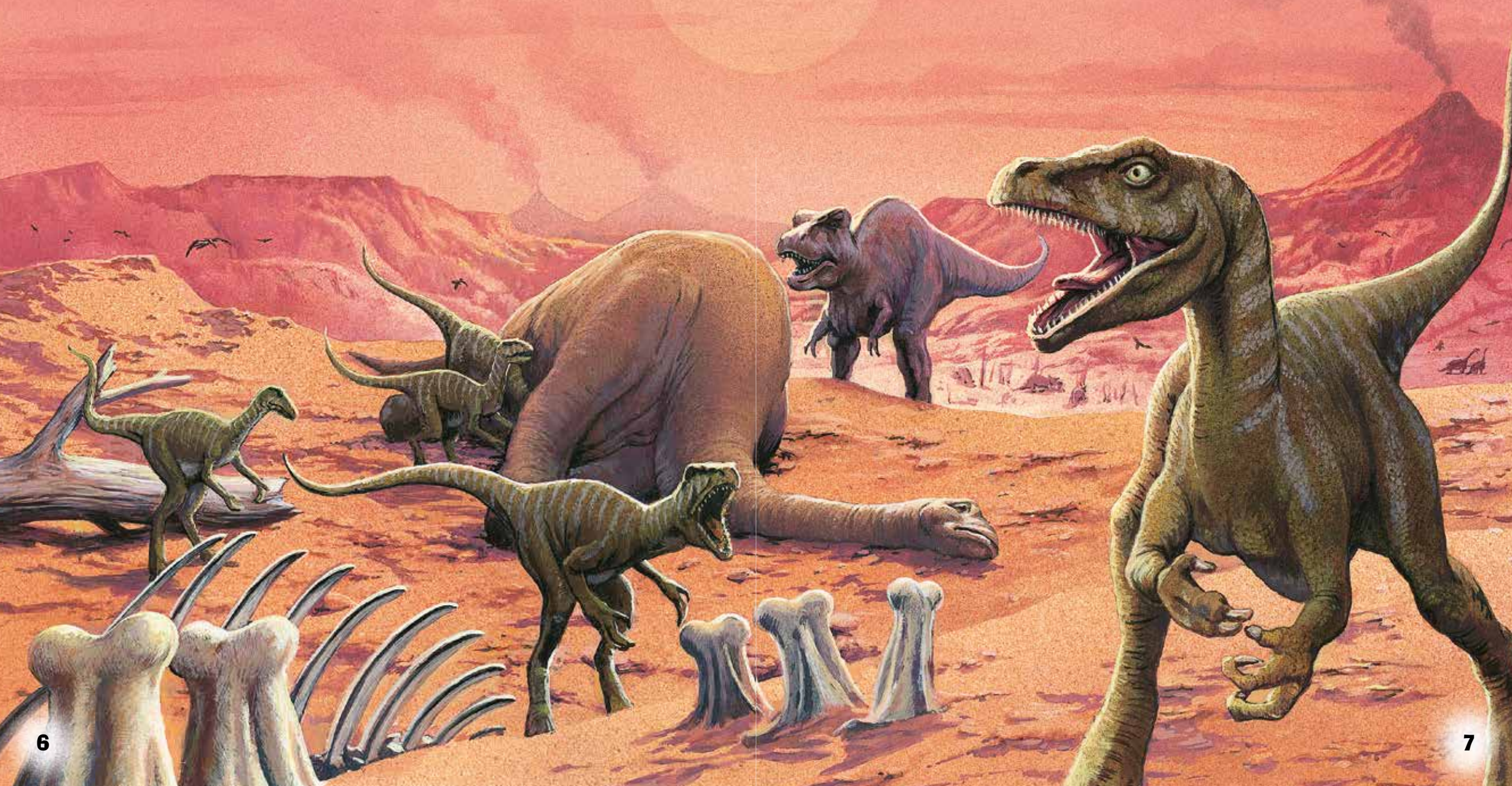


There was so much dust that it blocked out the light and heat of the Sun for many months, perhaps even years.

Without sunlight, plants could no longer grow.

Some dinosaurs ate plants. They needed tons of plants each day, so they died first when the plants disappeared.

As the plant-eating dinosaurs died, the meat-eaters who hunted them had less and less to eat.



The dust cleared at last and the Sun shone again, but by then it was too late for the dinosaurs. They had all starved to death.

It might have happened even faster than that.

Some scientists believe dinosaurs needed sunshine to warm them up. If this was so, they would have died from the cold even before the food ran out.



Fossil skeletons tell us about the dinosaurs that died.

Theory Two:

The Slow Death Theory

However, some scientists believe another theory.

This is what they believe:

At the time the dinosaurs appeared on Earth, there was only one enormous stretch of land on the whole planet. The dinosaurs roamed across almost every part of it.



This enormous land mass, called Pangaea, existed over 200 million years ago.

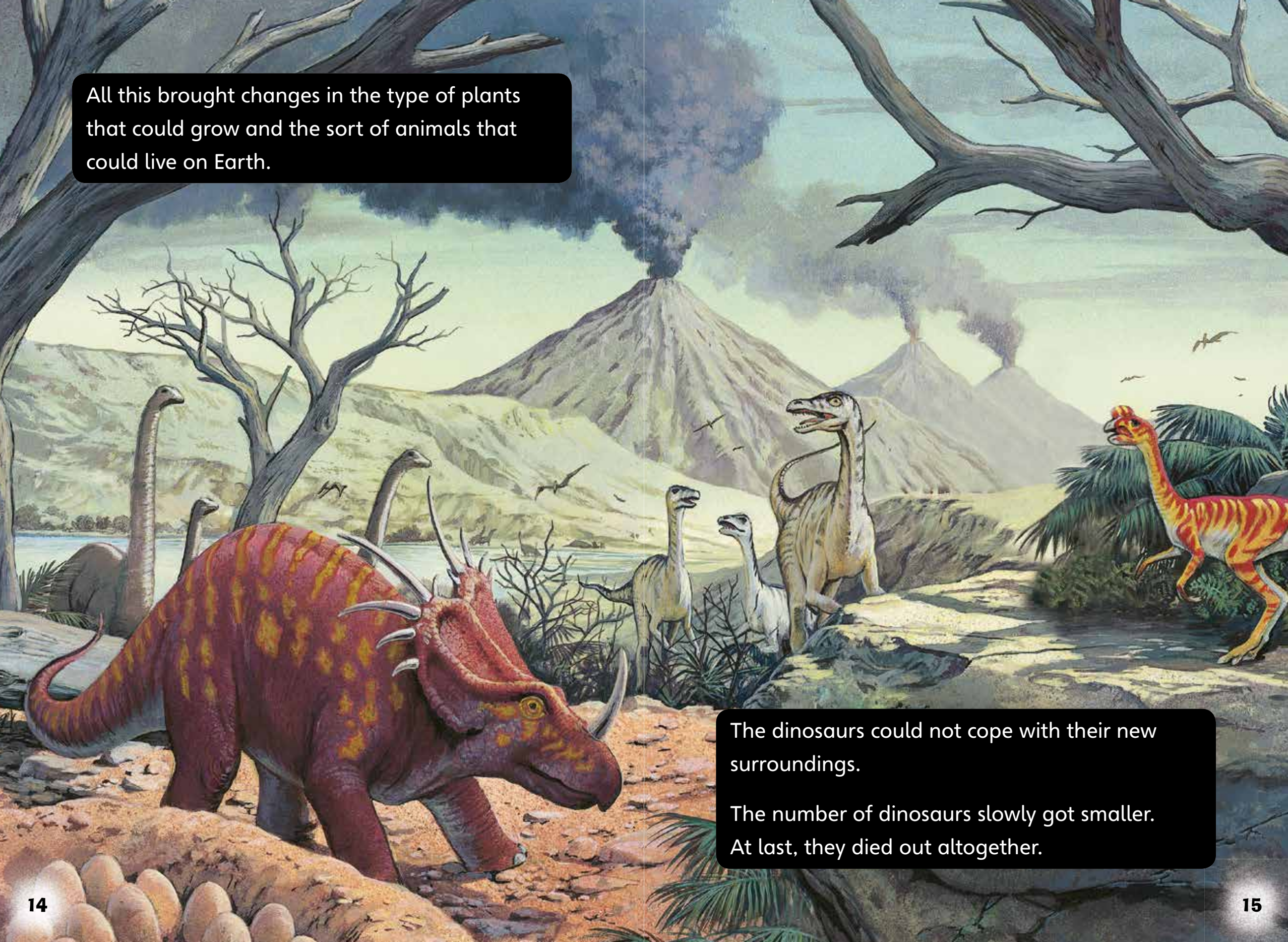
Over millions of years, though, this great mass of land started to break up very slowly.

During the break-up, volcanoes erupted and sea levels rose and fell.

The weather changed.

The world had been hot, but now it turned cold.





All this brought changes in the type of plants that could grow and the sort of animals that could live on Earth.

The dinosaurs could not cope with their new surroundings.

The number of dinosaurs slowly got smaller. At last, they died out altogether.

Which Theory Is Right?

A problem for scientists is that the same evidence can be used to support both the Great Disaster Theory and the Slow Death Theory.

A meteor crashing into Earth will produce glass beads, iridium, and cracks in quartz.

Glossary

continents	main masses of land on Earth's surface
crater	bowl-shaped hole made by a meteor crashing into Earth
iridium	metal found deep inside Earth and in objects from space, but rarely on Earth's surface
lava	melted rock flowing from a volcano
meteor	rock from space
quartz	type of crystal rock

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