

Prologue 1:

Three million years ago. A mastodon wanders through the prehistoric forest. It steps into a tar pit and is trapped. It trumpets. Falls to its knees and begins to sink.

The Near Backstory, Circa 1830:

A geologist (**Maclure**) and his assistant (Jacob Godderson) discover an unusual artifact, the jaw/bones of a mastodon, at a dig outside of **New Harmony, Indiana**. Maclure, leader of the Macluria, a conservative, religious splinter group that has recently left the New Harmony colony, sees it as a curiosity, and not much more. Godderson writes his cousin, Jonathan Episteme, an aspiring zoologist who's developing a radical theory of "speciation," to tell him of the unusual discovery.

Act 1

Invited by **Maclure** to participate in the social and scientific experimentation going on around New Harmony, the zoologist **Lesueur** crosses the Atlantic on "**The Boatload of Knowledge**." With him is his assistant Episteme, who carries the letter from Godderson (which he hasn't told Lesueur about). From what he's gleaned from the letter, Episteme believes this artifact may be the missing piece he needs to prove his theory evolution.

Lasseur/Episteme arrive. Godderson shows Episteme the artifact, which Maclure keeps locked away with other artifacts discovered at his digs. Episteme realizes that this fossil very likely is the piece of evidence he needs to prove his theories of speciation/evolution/tectonics/continental drift). He tells Godderson what this means. How it will change the way people see the origins of humanity.

Godderson realizes that such knowledge threatens the Biblical definition of God's creation and could undermine the religious order that holds society together. Even though he is somewhat sympathetic to science, he doesn't think humanity is ready for a "truth" that questions the nature of God's plan/control. He feels the discovery/idea needs to be brought out at a later time, if at all. He begins to indirectly thwart Episteme's attempts to examine the artifact.

One night shortly thereafter, Episteme is contacted by an individual who claims to belong to a secret organization of fellow scientists living in **New Harmony** (The Thrall) who want to help him steal/escape with the artifact so he can pursue his work and bring the truth of evolution to the world. They'll let him know when the time is right to make his move.

Likewise, Godderson is soon contacted by someone in the **Golden Troupe**, a group of New Harmony performers who are aware of The Thrall's plan to steal the artifact. They want Godderson to help them keep the artifact "hidden/safe." They tell him they'll keep him updated on The Thrall/Episteme's plans to steal the artifact via secret messages transmitted through signals and codes in their performances.

Act 2:

The night of the theft arrives. **The Golden Troupe** warns Godderson of the plan, but he somehow fails to get the message (he's tricked by the Thrall and misses the performance or is otherwise distracted). Episteme steals the artifact but chooses not to meet with The Thrall as agreed either because he wants to pursue his theory on his own and/or he suspects The Thrall may have an ulterior motive. Goddard and members of The Golden Troupe pursue him.

Episteme makes his way toward the coast with the goal of getting to the Galapagos to further prove his theories. He is being followed by Godderson/**The Golden Troupe** who are in turn being followed by The Thrall. As the groups journey, a series of events reveals The Thrall as a group of religious fanatics hoping to discredit all science/scientific method. They want to destroy the artifact and murder Episteme in a way that somehow discredits his ideas in order to prevent his theories from undermining a religious worldview.

The chase takes them all deep into the Pacific Ocean. During this time Episteme has been working with the artifact, sketching, theorizing, etc. He's essentially used it to flesh out his theory. Now he needs to reach the Galapagos to test his hypothesis.

Act 3:

Godderson/**The Golden Troupe**/The Thrall pursue Episteme all the way to the Galapagos. Once on the island, Episteme is captured by **The Golden Troupe** who then reveal their true radical pro science/destroy all religions intentions. The Thrall arrive and attack.

Episteme/Godderson now realize that both of these groups have beliefs that are far more radical than their own (i.e, Godderson may want to keep the artifact/information hidden, but unlike The Thrall he doesn't want to discredit all science or kill anyone over it; Episteme is pro science, but unlike **The Golden Troupe** he doesn't want to destroy all religions).

As the two groups fight, Episteme escapes. There is a moment during his escape where loses his notes and the artifact is shattered, but he salvages fragments of it. Godderson, in pursuit, comes across the notes and is tempted to destroy them, but knowing it only weakens his faith to destroy things that potentially disprove it, and knowing he'd be destroying his cousin's life's work, he does not. He finds Episteme. They return to the scene of the fight. Everyone is dead and/or gone. After what they've both just been through, they realize the world isn't ready for these ideas. They put the bone fragments and papers into a box and bury it among the rocks.

Epilogue: Some years later Charles Darwin walks the island, sketching birds. He discovers the box. Sees what's inside. The theory of evolution is *Fait Accompli*.