

whole concept of 'irreducible complexity' depends on the entirely false idea that whatever function an organ or a part of an organ has now is the one it must always have had."

"And that's it?" Gregor said. "The entire case for Intelligent Design rests on the work of one man?"

"It rests on nobody's work," Miss Marbledale said. "At least, it rests on nobody's scientific work. There is no scientific work in Intelligent Design. There are no peer-reviewed papers. There are no reproducible experiments. There are no falsifiable predictions. None. The entire movement consists of people sitting around saying, 'I don't see how evolution could have made that happen, so God must have done it.' And that, you see, is the point. They don't want to advance the cause of science. They don't want to expand human knowledge. All they want is to make it seem, to the general public, that there's something wrong with the theory of evolution, that it's just a guess, that it's probably not true."

"And you think it's true?"

"Of course I think it's true," Miss Marbledale said. "If you're actually willing to look at the evidence, there's nothing else to think. Evolution is a fact. Virtually everything that book says about it is false. Everything. Evidence in the fossil record? There's a ton of it, a huge, overwhelming mountain of it. Macroevolution? We can prove it. We have transitional fossils out the wazoo, full transitional sequences between reptiles and birds, for instance, and many more. The only point of that book is to lie and lie and lie again until it gets children so confused they don't know what's true, and the purpose of that, in the long run, is to discredit science. It's science that those people are afraid of."

"Because science disproves religion?" Gregor asked.

"Because science disproves *their* religion," Miss Marbledale said. "I've been a practicing Methodist for over sixty years, and evolution presents no challenge to my religion at all. But science is important and the scientific method is important. It doesn't solve everything, and it isn't the only thing people need in their lives, but it's important."

Antibiotics, heart transplants, even central heating and safe refrigeration for foods, we can't do without it. And science is the project of trying to find natural explanations for natural phenomenon. That's what distinguishes it from everything that came before. And if we don't teach that, if we teach children that it's all right to go back to the fifteenth century and look for supernatural causes instead of natural ones, we might as well fold up our tents and go back to the desert to eat locusts and honey. *Of Pandas and People* should not be in our school library because the things it says are lies. And evolution should be taught in our biology classes because evolution is true. And that ought to be enough of a reason for anybody."

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Back out at the front of the school, Gregor Demarkian looked around again and again at the skeleton of the new school building. He was carrying a little stack of books Miss Marbledale had given him, all hardbacks. She seemed to have dozens of copies of each one in boxes all around her office. There was Mark Isaak's *The Counter-Creationism Handbook*. There was Tim Berra's *Evolution and the Myth of Creationism*. There was Donald R. Prothero's *Evolution: What the Fossils Say and Why It Matters*, sitting on top.

"That's the best book out there for a popular audience that not only lays out the evidence from the fossil record, but directly counters Creationism and Intelligent Design," Miss Marbledale said. "I just wish it would come out in paperback. You have no idea how much it cost me to get all these in hardcover. And I give them to everybody. I even tried to give them to Franklin Hale and Alice McGuffie, but they ran, true to form. They wouldn't even take copies for the sake of being polite. And that's the enemy, Mr. Demarkian, and it really is an enemy. That small-minded, smug pride in being ignorant. I have no idea what Creationists are like outside of Snow Hill, or what the Intelligent Design people are like when they're attached to those big national think tanks, but the simple fact of the matter is that here, on the ground,