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## The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel

By George Gaylord Simpson, Joan Simpson Burns, Arthur C. Clarke, Stephen Jay Gould



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**The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel** By George Gaylord Simpson, Joan Simpson Burns, Arthur C. Clarke, Stephen Jay Gould

This lost novella by the century's most renowned paleontologist has been called the greatest time-travel story in more than one hundred years.

Vanishing from Earth on February 30, 2162, while working on a problem of quantum theory, research chronologist Sam Magruder is thrown back 80 million years in time. Endowed with the intelligence of a twenty-second-century man, Magruder struggles to survive, feeding on scrambled turtle eggs and diligently recording his observations on a stone-slab diary, even as menacing tyrannosaurus try to gnaw off his limbs.

Filled with magnificent descriptions of the dinosaurs as only Simpson himself could render them, *The Dechronization of Sam Magruder* is not only a classic time-travel tale but a philosophical work that astutely ponders the complexities of human existence and achievement.



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**The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel** By George Gaylord Simpson, Joan Simpson Burns, Arthur C. Clarke, Stephen Jay Gould **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This intelligent, if conventional time-travel yarn, which was found by the daughter of the eminent paleontologist Simpson (d. 1984), shows some of the crusty wit of his idiosyncratic autobiography, *Concessions to the Improbable*. Simpson tells the tale of Sam Magruder, a 22nd-century scientist who slips back to the late Cretaceous period. In this "Crusoe of the Cretaceous," as Clarke dubs it in his appreciative introduction, Magruder's struggle to maintain his mental composure in utter isolation is as important as his struggle for survival among the saurians. In the manner of H.G. Wells's *Time Machine*, the tale is framed by present-day (in this case, 22nd-century) interlocutors, who try to make sense of Magruder's record, which has been found by a geologist. Simpson uses the story to advance his preferred hypotheses about dinosaurs, most notably that they were cold-blooded and slow (a vision that has come under increasing attack since the 1960s, according to Gould's afterword), but he doesn't sacrifice storytelling to pedantry. When Magruder is shocked at the gleaming white teeth of a T-rex?he'd previously known only fossil-brown?the thought is shocking to the reader, too. The end, which involves an epiphany Sam has when trapping small, shrew-like mammals for their fur, is comic and oddly moving at once: he realizes, with a sense of both awe and the ridiculous, that the creature is his "Great-grandpa."

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From [Booklist](#)

Reporters we expect to stash their unpublished Great American Novel in the desk drawer, but famous scientists? Such was the fate of this quaint sf novella by Simpson, a pathbreaking paleontologist who died in 1984. The setup is simple: in the twenty-second century, some academics gather to read an astounding discovery--chiseled writing on eight stone slabs excavated from Cretaceous Period slate. It's the testimony of Sam Magruder, researcher of a quantum theory of time who--shazamm!--slips between quanta and falls into a dinosaur-infested swamp, with no way back to the future. As Earth's only human, Magruder faces cosmic loneliness and despair; but as a scientist he grasps the chance to observe the dinos and settle for future paleontologists the controversies about their appearance and behavior. More than a whimsical survival yarn about a castaway, Simpson's charming tale also touches motifs prominent in the sf genre (e.g., time travel) and receives a deserved publicity boost with a preface and postscript by Arthur Clarke and Stephen Jay Gould, respectively. *Gilbert Taylor*

Review

"This novella brims with an intellectual vitality...*The Dechronization of Sam Magruder* is a small gem, and readers who prize elegance over bombast will be rewarded by seeking it out." --*San Francisco Chronicle*

"The late George Gaylord Simpson's short novel is an amazing little discovery." --*Alan Cheuse, All Things Considered*

"Excellent physical descriptions of dinosaurs and their various adaptations...[But] amid the sauropods and hadrosaurs is a flesh-and-blood man, aching with total and irreversible loneliness." --*Alan Lightman, The New York Times Book Review*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Darrell Fowler:**

This The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel book is simply not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is definitely information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This kind of The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel without we realize teach the one who studying it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't always be worry The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel can bring any time you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even telephone. This The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel having excellent arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

#### **Nancy Jackson:**

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic within the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? May be reading a book could be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of reserve that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the publication untitled The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel can be great book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

#### **Frances Barrett:**

A lot of people always spent their own free time to vacation or maybe go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read any book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you just read you can spent all day long to reading a reserve. The book The Dechronization of Sam Magruder: A Novel it is rather good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to bring this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can more easily to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book possesses high quality.

#### **Ester Beckles:**

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