



# Dragons: A Natural History

*Karl Shuker*

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## **Dragons: A Natural History** Karl Shuker

For millennia, few animals have fascinated mankind more than dragons. But until now, no rigorous survey has captured them in all their glorious variety. "Dragons: A Natural History" is that survey...a one-of-a-kind book, bringing these captivating creatures to life with lavish illustrations and vivid commentary. This marvelous compendium will take you on a journey that begins with the earliest serpent dragons and continues to the present day. Along the way, Dr. Karl Shuker, one of the world's leading experts on dracontology, shares his wealth of knowledge on:

**Dragon dwellings:** These magnificent beasts have been found in an astounding number of places. Dragons and their near relatives have found niches in every ecosystem on the planet -- from the mountains of Greece to the forests of northern Europe to the volcanic plain of Mesoamerica to the river valleys of China -- and have, as a consequence, become deeply embedded in human culture.

**Dragon variety:** Here are five main types of dragons, emerging from the floods or flames of history -- the frightening Serpents, Wyverns, and Classical Dragons of the West; the Sky Dragons, including beneficent Chinese Dragons, Amphipteres, and winged New World species; the Neo-Dragons such as the Basilisk, Salamander, and the like; as well as dozens of varieties and subspecies, including orms, guivres, lindorms, and more.

**Dragon traditions:** From St. George's batwinged, scaly-legged adversary to Wagner's Fafnir to Quetzalcoatl, mythic dragons have been a powerful presence in the legends of humanity. Each of them is described and illustrated in "Dragons: A Natural History."

## **Dragons: A Natural History Details**

Date : Published November 1st 1995 by Simon & Schuster (first published 1995)

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Author : Karl Shuker

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# From Reader Review Dragons: A Natural History for online ebook

## SmarterLilac says

An odd discussion of dragon myths and their (possible) zoological inspirations. There are some very strange things in this book, including some folk legends I'd never heard of, like that of the lindorm. I found the author's coy, 'Is this stuff 'real' or not?' tone annoying, but still gave this to a dragon enthusiast family member for the holidays.

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## Christopher says

This was great fun. The book is a collection of 2-6 page entries on various dragons, their legends, and stories. These are roughly organized in chapters that have some commonality, like air-dragons or neo-dragons. Each is bookmarked by an introduction based on the commonality and coda that often focuses on a related cryptid.

Many of the entries are straight tellings of dragon myths, and a lot of the classics including St. George, Fafnir, and Tiamat are here. Others are more obscure including dragon-birds from Illinois and Swedish lindorms. Then there are explanations of deeper mythic dragons, like Quetzalcoatl. Through all of this is a low-key belief that serpentine monsters might still be lurking somewhere in the world. This gives a feel that the author truly sees himself as a dracontologist. This makes it a nice companion to more light-hearted fare like *Dragonology: The Complete Book of Dragons*.

Don't take this as an implication that this is a kid's book. Even though I was reading it to my 5-year-old, the vocabulary is very complex (and veering towards the bombastic in many cases). Definitely worth a read.

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## Jason Cummins says

These stories and lore about various dragons and serpents were quite interesting. Many were also quite humorous such as the story of the guiver that was frightened away by the sight of a naked farmer.

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## P.S. Winn says

Like dragons? Curious about what they are really like? Grab this book that tells all you need to know.

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## Polenth Blake says

The book is well illustrated and discusses dragons with a cryptozoology slant. The mythology information is a bit rough round the edges. A few things are downright wrong. It's an enjoyable book, but don't rely on it heavily for research work.

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**Tricia Griffith says**

So nice to read a "history" of dragons that isn't purely fictional! I found this book very enlightening and fun to read.

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**Sonkitty says**

This book provided an assortment of stories and information about dragons, some familiar, some not. I like dragons a lot in artwork, so I wanted to explore the stories further. Unfortunately, I borrowed a library copy with a few pages missing so I hope some day I can get my hands on an undamaged copy. In any case, I liked reading the stories with the descriptions and speculation, fun use of language in the story-telling. As another review said, "bombastic."

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**Melissa says**

I read the myths and stories about the different dragons and skipped the parts about where they wrote about what real animal the stories may have come from.

The stories were interesting and the rest I found a bit boring which is why I skipped it.

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**Kaylabookworm22 L says**

It was very good!

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**Una Tiers says**

Great information awesome pictures.

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**Anna says**

When I first read the introduction to this book, I thought it would be rather boring. Boy, was I wrong! Reading about the different types of dragons in mythological story form was fascinating!

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**Laura says**

Peter got a book on dragons. He looked at it for most of the morning.  
This is Mom: Peter reads well for a Kindergartener, but not well enough to read the Dragons book.

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### **Fabio says**

Charming book. From the Lambton worm to Quetzalcoatl, this book is a comprehensive catalog of Dragons and will prove satisfying if you enjoy knowing things like the difference between a Wyvern and a Lindorm (both are dragons with two legs, but the former has wings too). Other notable appearances include the Bunyip, the Piasa, the Sarrush of Babylon and the Chinese Long Wang.

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### **Joshua McDonald says**

the legends were interesting, could have done without the theory and opinions about dragons being surviving dinosaurs though.

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### **Jessica says**

Not what I was expecting. By the intro and the description of the book I thought it would try to provide strong proof and examples to its argument of the existence of dragons, however, it was an entire book of fairy tales and legends of various reptiles (with many concessions as to how many of them were false) and I could never keep track of whether the author did believe in dragons or did not. Finished the book and I am still unsure of his argument, although I did receive some inspiration from the stories, I did not enjoy this book because of the confusion.

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