



ME AND SOME OF THE BERBER KIDS WHO HELPED ME FIND THE BONES OF THE KRAYT DRAGON.



final dune, and the chief of the Berber group pointed down dramatically to his son's rediscovery. They waited for me to descend alone. There, under the harsh glare of the sun, sticking up from the sand, were bones. I knelt, laughing. It was all so impossible. I have hunted dinosaurs in the field, and I know the thrill of bone discovery well. It keeps many of us out there at it year after year, waiting for the one gleam in the dirt that makes it all worthwhile. I had been among the small group in 1987 that recovered rare dinosaur eggshell from Devil's Coulee in Alberta. But all that paled before these few Fibreglas bones in the lonely Tunisian sands. Ryan recorded it all, smiling with me as he fought to stay upright in the rising winds.

The remains were rather accurate copies of real sauropod bones, not mere mise-en-scene impressionistic fakes. I rose from this amazing discovery to seek more. And soon found them, scattered far and wide across the dunes. This had been most of a real sauropod dinosaur, painted bone color on one side and left plain grey on the side that faced away from the camera. Amongst the other remains I found a giant claw. That stopped us again, and I confess that this piece seemed simply too good to pass up. But I wanted to leave everything for any future travelers who might seek this place. Ryan responded that such were likely to be damn few. "You're not appreciating how weird you are," he said. "Who else is into the



movie this much, speaks Arabic and Berber, and knows that this is the right place to search, out of all the sand in Tunisia? And are they going to run into that Berber kid? Pick it up." So...I did. I had not disturbed any of the other traces we had found, like the set details in the courtyard, but Ryan seemed to have a point about this particular case. As I was packing it, Ryan held out our satellite locator and called on our orbiting allies in space to pinpoint these exact coordinates to within 30 feet. He tucked the device back into his belt, saying, "You never know."

I went on to discover the location of the Tanis Digs, the Map Room, and even the Well of Souls, since *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was filmed here in 1980—but that's another story. My *Star Wars* expedition was complete.

By the time we returned to Carthage I was completely exhausted. I had been getting something like four or five hours of sleep most nights, and we had often had to skip eating for time's sake. I hardly remember the blur of returning home. Once back in green hills of the Midwest I pulled the Fibreglass claw out of my pack. Here in my hand was a relic from Tatooine; the sole physical link between the wondrous adventure I had just completed, and the wondrous adventure film that had inspired me to travel there. 

