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| Nota di contenuto | Frontmatter -- Contents -- Prologue. Bushes and Lizards -- 1. A Sphinx in Arcady -- 2. The Country of Dried Skin -- 3. A Cactus Heresy -- 4. The Creator's Dumping Ground -- 5. An Evolutionary Backwater -- 6. Anti-Darwinian Lacertilians -- 7. Descriptive Confusion -- 8. A Murderous Brood -- 9. Hopeful Monsters -- 10. An Old Earth-Feature -- 11. A Climatic Accident -- 12. An Evolutionary Frontier -- 13. A |

Neo-Darwinian Galapagos -- 14. Mexican Geneses -- 15. Desert Relicts -- 16. Madro-Tertiary Attitudes -- 17. A Friendly Land -- 18. Furry Paleontologists -- 19. Dawn Horses and Dinosaurs -- 20. Axelrod Antagonistes -- 21. The Midday Sun -- 22. Lacertilian Ambiguities -- 23. Xerothermic Invasions -- 24. Sand Swimmers -- 25. Axelrod Ascendant -- 26. An Evolutionary Museum -- 27. The Riddle of the Palms -- 28. Bushes and Camels -- 29. Axelrod Askew -- 30. Paradigms Postponed -- 31. The Falcon and the Shrikes -- Epilogue. The Sphinx's Lair -- Notes -- Selected Bibliography -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

Described as "a writer in the tradition of Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and other self-educated seers" by the San Francisco Chronicle, David Rains Wallace turns his attention in this new book to another distinctive corner of California-its desert, the driest and hottest environment in North America. Drawing from his frequent forays to Death Valley, Red Rock Canyon, Kelso Dunes, and other locales, Wallace illuminates the desert's intriguing flora and fauna as he explores a controversial, unresolved scientific debate about the origin and evolution of its unusual ecosystems. Eminent scientists and scholars appear throughout these pages, including maverick paleobiologist Daniel Axelrod, botanist Ledyard Stebbins, and naturalists Edmund Jaeger and Joseph Wood Krutch. Weaving together ecology, geology, natural history, and mythology in his characteristically eloquent voice, Wallace reveals that there is more to this starkly beautiful landscape than meets the eye.
