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Lucy Long Ago: Uncovering The Mystery Of Where We Came From



Synopsis

Illustrated in full color throughout with stunning computer-generated artwork and with rare paleo photography, this story of scientific sleuthing invites us to wonder what our ancestors were like. From the discovery of Lucy's bones in Hadar, Ethiopia, to the process of recovering and interpreting them (a multidisciplinary approach with contributions from paleontologists, paleoanthropologists, archeologists, geologists and geochronologists), this book shows how a pile of 47 bones led scientists to discover a new -- and, at 3.2 million years old, a very very old -- species of hominid, ancestral to humans. Scientists involved include: James Aronson, geochronologist at Dartmouth, NH John Gurche, paleoartist at Cornell, NY Donald Johansen, scientist at Institute of Human Origins at Arizona State University Owen Lovejoy, biological anthropologist at Kent State, Ohio Dirk Van Tuerenhout at Houston's Museum of Natural Science, Texas.

Book Information

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Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

It was just a bit of fossilized elbow sticking slightly above ground in Hadar, Ethiopia, but it was something that would stun paleoanthropologist Donald Johanson. He and his crew were exuberant and played a Beatles song, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," loud and long through the first night of discovery. Lucy, as she was named by Johanson, was later known in Ethiopia as "Dinkeneshe," or "beautiful one." They began to pull tiny bones from the soil. Eventually they pulled forty-seven

fossilized skeletal bones that would change the way we thought about human evolution. Lucy in the ground . . . there were a lot of questions that needed answering! Johanson very carefully wrapped and tucked Lucy into his suitcase and they went off to Cleveland for reconstruction and research. Prior to Lucy's discovery, only bits and pieces of skeletons had been found. This was an unusual discovery because fossilization of bone was a very rare occurrence. After extensive thought and "detailed comparisons to chimpanzees gorillas, and South African australopithecine specimens, the scientists concluded that Lucy was in fact a new kind of hominid." There were still more questions the scientists had to ask themselves. How old was she? Boy or girl? Did she Wobble or walk? Why, if she walked, did she decide to do so? What did she look like? Questions, questions, questions . . . there were a LOT of them! This was an exciting and riveting read. It started off like a mystery and only got better. The book drew me in very quickly with such crisp, moving lines as "One day though, it crumpled to the ground and lay in a heap. Unmoving." The amazing, numerous photographs lend a lot to this story. Throughout the book are numerous informative sidebars that are very interesting. In the back of the book is a glossary, an index and additional source materials a student could look to for additional information. This is one Lucy story you are going to LOVE!

An earth-shattering discovery in Ethiopia rocked the anthropological world when scientists unearthed the skeleton of a little creature whose like had never been seen before. A mere 3.2 million years ago, the skeleton dubbed "Lucy" had walked on two legs, and defied all categorization scientists had made thus far--was she an early ancestor of man or ape? How did she live? What did she look like? This beautifully designed and informative picture book is eloquent in its treatment of the subject. The author lays out, step by step, the process that takes place when handling field work. My only complaint is the lagging pace of the material towards the end: it provides a satisfying conclusion, but younger readers or those with short attention spans might lose interest.

Recommended for older elementary school children and middle school students.

Used this with our Project Archaeology unit as an additional read. It worked well to get students thinking about different theories and spawned interesting conversations.

The book was very informative. It was easy to read and fully covered the subject. It was very helpful in the preparation of my project.

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