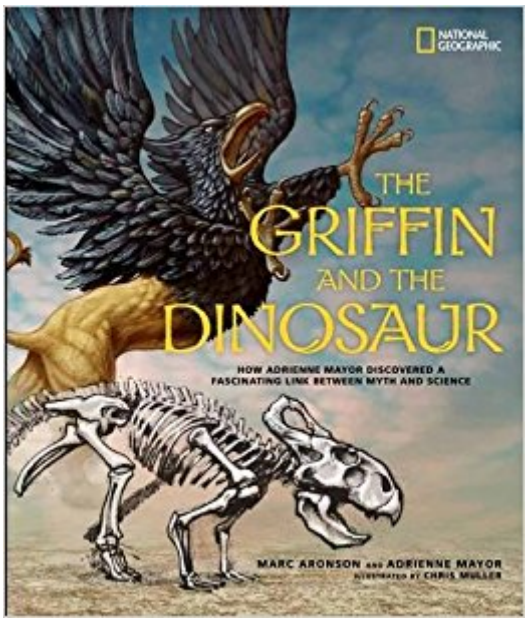
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The Griffin And The Dinosaur: How Adrienne Mayor Discovered A Fascinating Link Between Myth And Science (Science & Nature)



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Synopsis

Could Griffins have been real? When Adrienne Mayor carefully read the ancient Greek and Roman descriptions, this mythic hybrid of a lion and an eagleÃ Â sounded like something people had actually seen. What could explain that evidence? After a decade of hunting through myths, poring over old maps, and tracingÃ Â the discoveries of modern dinosaur hunters, she found the answer: awesome dinosaur fossils observed by ancient gold-hunters in the Gobi desert. Here is theÃ Â story of one insightful, curious, and determined woman who solved the mystery of the Griffin, and invented a new science. Now she and others travel the worldÃ Â matching myths and fossils.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 5Ã¢â ¬â œ8Ã¢â ¬â •Aronson has come together with folklorist/historian Mayor to create this intriguing account of how ancient people conceived of the griffin. How did the ancients come to dream up these amazing creatures? Were they the result of creative minds? Or was there something in the environment that led people to believe in these phenomena, such as how the mythical Cyclops and water monsters bear great resemblance to the bones of ancient dinosaurs? In

this work, Aronson describes the journey that Mayor embarked upon to discover if there is a connection between the legend of the griffin and scientific fact. Over the course of eight well-written chapters, information about Mayor's life and research unfolds, letting readers travel to the many countries she visited to conduct her work. From a very young age, Mayor sought answers to the same questions that would inspire her later in life. A complementary blend of photography and ancient artwork aid the readers' perception of the myths and science that are shared in this book. A solid addition about mythology, art, and science for most collections.Ã¢â ¬â •Katy Charles, Virgil Elementary School, Cortland, NY

In another forcefully written tribute to the thrill of archaeological discovery, Aronson, author of If Stones Could Speak (2010), retraces coauthor MayorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s search for evidence to support the idea that griffins and other monsters in ancient Greek mythology were inspired by dinosaur fossils. That search begins in a library (what better place?) and leads through clues carefully gathered from art and folklore of the Greek islands, the remote gold fields of the ancient Scythians, and all the way to the justly renowned fossil beds of MongoliaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Flaming Cliffs. Plenty of on-site sketches, photos of artifacts, and artistÃ¢â ¬â„¢s conceptions from Muller add dramatic visual elements to the tale, and the maps and resource lists at the end (not seen) will provide intrigued readers with avenues for further study of the tantalizing links Ã¢â ¬Å“between,Ã¢â ¬Â• as the subtitle puts it, Ã¢â ¬Å“myth and science.Ã¢â ¬Â• As a largely self-taught researcher, rather than a pure product of academe, Mayor also provides a model for AronsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s liberating, if arguable, contention that Ã¢â ¬Å“anyone can become an expert, it just takes being patient, observant, and curious.Ã¢â ¬Â• Grades 5-7. --John Peters

This book was so amazing for our entire family, we purchased it after stumbling across it on the library shelf. Excellent real learning mixed with natural fascination. We later bought more books by the same author.

Interesting premise, the whole family enjoyed reading it. My 11 year old is enamored with mythology and loved this book. The stand-out feature is the art. Mr. Muller is an artistic genius! I'm considering purchasing a second copy so I can frame the prints.

A book I needed, fast service, every thing good.

Perfect!

I remember back in 2007 when the American Museum of Natural History in NYC premiered a show called ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Mythic CreaturesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. It made a fair amount of press and with good reason. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not every day you see full-scale models of mythical creatures presented in a serious museum setting. The show got some nice write-ups but though I listened to the explanations of why it was going on, I didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t quite catch the whole point. To me it just sort of sounded like a cheap ploy to lure more patrons into the museumÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s exhibits. A bit of the old P.T Barnum, albeit with a classier imprimatur. Years passed and I forgot about the show right up until the publication of The Griffin and the Dinosaur. As I read the book, memories of the show came back to me, as did my complete and utter misunderstanding of what it had been trying to accomplish. Fortunately, I am happy to report that once in a while in this life a gal gets a second chance. With Marc Aronson and Adrienne MayorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s hard work, now I have a book before me that clarifies the true connection between the prehistoric and the mythical. Focused through a single womanÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s obsessive search, this book comes off as both a riveting historical mystery as well as a wonderful example of how a personÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s passions might take them places they never imagined they might travel. The future isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t written in stone but it might just be written in bones.It was kind of a goofy idea. The sort of thing a person might consider off-handedly then forget about five minutes later. But for Adrienne Mayor, the idea stuck. It was simple too. You see, after doing lots of research at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Ms. Mayor noticed a strange pattern. Reading texts by ancient Greeks she noticed that when they discussed creatures like griffins they always sounded like they knew about these animals firsthand. Is it possible that these creatures were conjured up after the Greeks found some ancient bones of one kind of another? Not a natural born scholar, Adrienne always considered herself more of an artist than anything else. Still, this question about the griffinÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s origins intrigued her. What she could not have expected was how her search would take her from Greece to Samos to The Museum of the Rockies to distant China. Infinitely interesting, illustrated with multiple photographs, sketches, ancient images and contemporary illustrations, Mayor not only shows where our ancestors got their seemingly goofy ideas, but gives these people a form of credit and respect that is certainly their due.Every Marc Aronson book is different. Generalizing is not something you can really do when you discuss him as an author. I have found in the past that some of his books ran a bit on the long and lengthy side, but beyond that there arenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t any real connecting threads between one project and

another. Yet if I found Mr. Aronson to be a bit more loquacious at times than he needed to be, no such objection could possibly be leveled at The Griffin and the Dinosaur. Coming in at a svelte 48 pages, a number normally associated with slightly longer picture books, Aronson wastes no time getting to the meat of the matter. Turn to the first page and thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Adrienne, age six. Four pages later sheÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s studying in Athens while her fiancÃƒÂ© works on his ancient Greek fortress research. Aronson cuts to the chase, helped in large part by his interviews with Adrienne. The result is a well-rounded portrait of a single woman going against the odds to prove something both interesting and odd. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s research presented to kids as adventure in a format theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re going to actually WANT to read. How rare is that?I know that one reviewer of this book was dismayed by an interpretation of Marc AronsonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s message here that says that people who closely observe the world around them are just as good as professional scholars in the field. For the record, I do not happen to agree that that is what Aronson is saying. I think it far more likely that Aronson is displaying the need for balance. You can sit behind dusty tomes all day long with your professional degree hanging up upon a wall, but if you donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t go out and try new ideas and speak to new people and even do a bit of exploring (of one kind or another) then you cannot be surprised when a woman like Ms. Mayor goes about making a fabulous, hitherto unknown (or unproved) discovery. By the same token, the person who observes the world around them closely but never picks up a book or does even rudimentary research is going to completely miss the potential connections out there that could justify their work. Mayor exhibited both a willingness to learn and a sharp-eyed curiosity that was willing to question. In an era when so much research is beholden to outside interests, it does the heart good to read a book about a woman who set out to discover what many might have considered impossible to prove.The extra details turn out to be just as enchanting. The entire history of the Scythians and how they might have been an inspiration for some of the women tales out there is captivating. Even more so their gold, as well as the discovery of Megalopolis. And then thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s that amazing look at mammoth skulls and how they might have inspired the stories of the Cyclops. It all got me to thinking about the role of myths in the world and their beginnings. Maybe a kid will read this book and begin to wonder what the roots of other great myths might be. Will they start poring over Hindi and Norse myths, looking for clues to the past? Or will they simply get a better sense of one of the big themes of the book: that ancient people had reasons for making up the stories that they did. For me, that was a moral well worth taking away from the story. We have a tendency to look down our nose at our ancient ancestors, but as this book shows, these people had their reasons for thinking the way that they did. We should never be

so egotistical as to believe that we are the first people to find the bones of long extinct creatures and to make up reasons for their existence.As for the art, for the most part itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s okay but artist Chris Muller gets off to a shaky start. His presence in the book makes a lot of sense. I could completely understand the need to ratchet up the kid-friendly elements of the story, of course. If you name your book The Griffin and the Dinosaur then you better bloody well have a couple griffins in there (to say nothing of the dinosaurs). In fact, when Muller is working on the mythical, he is at his best. The cover, for example, is striking, as are his images of an fighting a griffin or a sleeping griffin protecting its nest. Where it all breaks down is when he has to deal with reality. The publication page says that the paintings were made with ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“traditional media ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ pencil and watercolors ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ and digital painting.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Traditional media is fine with me, but the digital painting proves to be occasionally painful. For example, a preliminary image of young Adrienne dowsing above the skeleton of a dinosaur is baffling partly because I couldnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t find any mentions of dowsing in the text and partly because the CGI cloud cover contrasts horribly with the drawn Adrienne. It feels like a cheap image in an otherwise classy book. Happily, it is the only moment when I felt that way. Other images in the book border or plunge right into the fantastical, and thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s appropriate for the moments they tend to illustrate.This is the Possession by A.S. Byatt of childrenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s literature. An honest-to-goodness historical mystery complete with an early hypothesis, a likable heroine, multiple dead ends, and at the end? GOLD! Literally. It succeeds at doing many things at once, but never runs too long or bores the reader with its findings. Mayor is a likable and ultimately unintimidating subject for kids to follow. For those children obsessed with myths and legends, this might be the ideal way to transition them gently from the world of the fantastical into one of research and exploration. For Percy Jackson lovers everywhere.For ages 9-12.

An exciting adventure in a way, this story begins with Adrienne Mayor born in 1946, as a young schoolgirl who is fascinated by mythology and in particular with the story of the Griffin. How does a shy, quiet kid from Souix Falls, South Dakota, come to develop a new field of research - geomythology? This book by Marc Aronson follows her path as student from country to country as she searches through ancient texts about mythical creatures. This is no easy task as she learns ancient languages in order to read these texts.How Adrienne is able to discover what others miss is the way she thinks. She is sure that these ancient people had to have seen something real, even if only bones. She knows she is onto something meaningful and very early in history. At first she knows very little about these early dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals, but she is determined

and learns. Her goal is set on the Griffin. There must have been bones of a real animal to influence the people of the time. Therefore, she must go back through the pages of time to find one thing. Where did the first story come from, and why? The Griffin was said to protect gold. Where was gold found along with prehistoric bones? This is how she progressed until finally finding the link from paleontology to her "Griffin."A enticing story for young and old, a detective story of how to seek and find from the most ancient of times. The fascination of paleontology captures our imagination already, and here the vision of what can be discovered turns to mythology. How exciting is that? I, for one, want to read all the books in this genre published by National Geographic Kids.I received this book in exchange for an honest review. The review and rating are based on my own perception.

I was not expecting a book written for young adults. I found some interesting information, just not what I wanted.

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