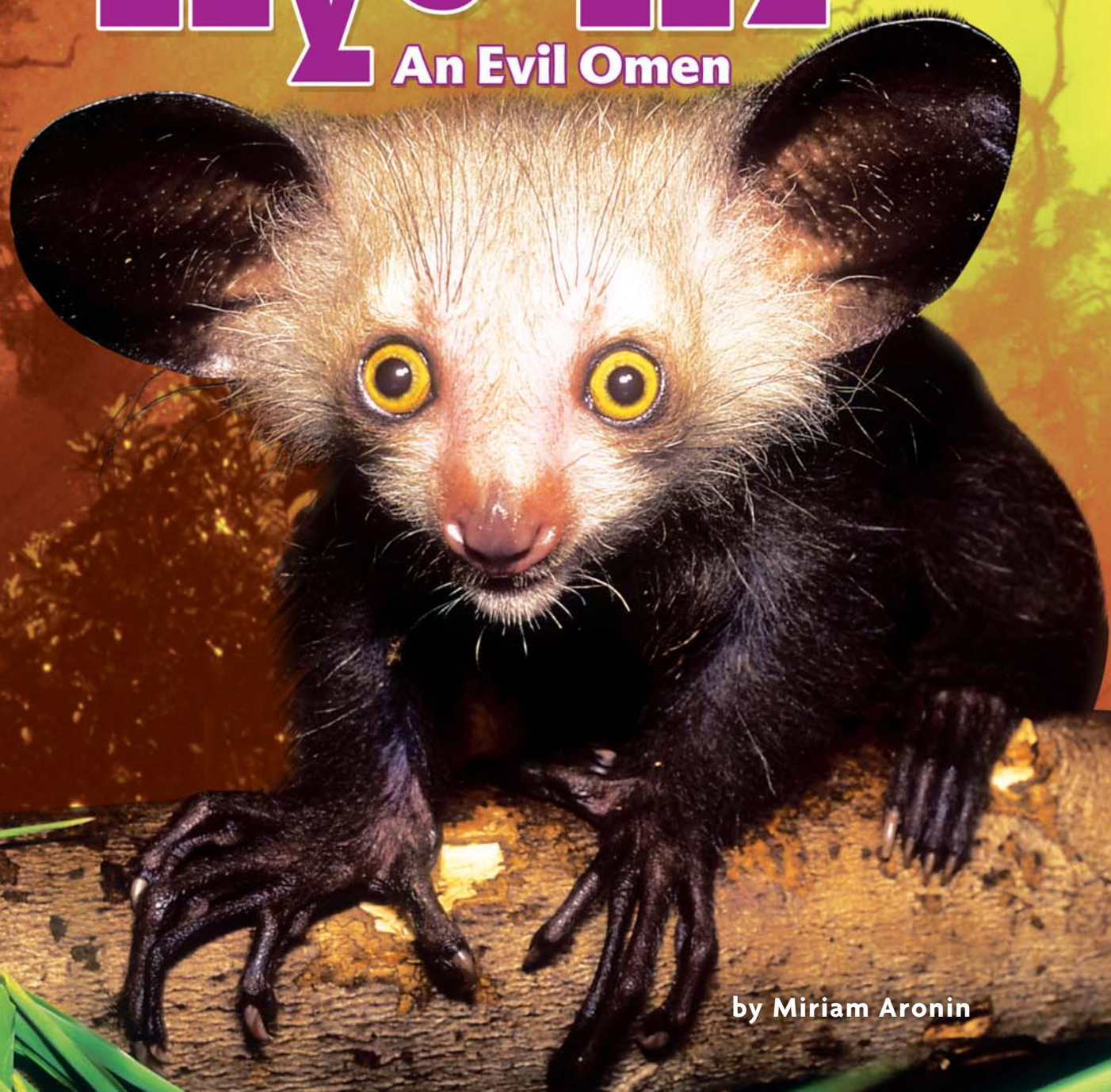


Uncommon
Animals

Aye-Aye

An Evil Omen



by Miriam Aronin

[Intentionally Left Blank]



Aye-Aye

An Evil Omen



by Miriam Aronin

Consultant: Eleanor Sterling, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Biodiversity and Conservation
American Museum of Natural History

BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

New York, New York

Credits

Cover and Title Page, © David Haring/Oxford Scientific Films/Photolibary; TOC, © A & J Visage/Alamy; 4–5, © Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures; 6T, © Cyril Ruoso/JH Editorial/Minden Pictures; 6B, © Kevin Frey; 8, © New York Public Library; 9, © Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures; 9TL, © Pete Oxford/Nature Picture Library; 9BR, © Nick Garbutt/npl/Minden Pictures; 10, © Lynn M. Stone/Nature Picture Library; 11, © Elizabeth Bomford/ardea.com; 12L, © Pete Oxford/Nature Picture Library; 12R, © Nick Garbutt/npl/Minden Pictures; 13, © Olivier Langrand/Peter Arnold Inc.; 14, © Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures; 15, © David Haring/Oxford Scientific Films/Photolibary; 16, © A & J Visage/Alamy; 17L, © A & J Visage/Alamy; 17R, © Rhett A. Butler/wildmadagascar.org; 18L, © A & J Visage/Alamy; 18R, © Chris Hellier/Chris Hellier Photography; 19, © David Haring/OSF/Animals Animals-Earth Scenes; 20, © A & J Visage/Alamy; 21T, © Barrie Britton/Nature Picture Library; 21B, © A & J Visage/Alamy; 22, © Lemur Conservation Foundation; 23, © Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures; 24, © Bristol Zoo/Press Association/AP Images; 25, © David Haring/Oxford Scientific Films/Photolibary; 26–27, © David Haring/Oxford Scientific Films/Photolibary; 28, © Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures; 29T, © Pete Oxford/Minden Pictures; 29B, © Gerald Cubitt/BIOS/Peter Arnold Inc.; 32, © DANI/JESKE/Animals Animals-Earth Scenes.

Publisher: Kenn Goin

Editorial Director: Adam Siegel

Creative Director: Spencer Brinker

Original Design: Dawn Beard Creative

Photo Researcher: Jennifer Bright

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Aronin, Miriam.

Aye-aye : an evil omen / by Miriam Aronin.

p. cm. — (Uncommon animals)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-731-4 (library binding)

ISBN-10: 1-59716-731-2 (library binding)

1. Aye-aye—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

QL737.P935A76 2009

599.8'3—dc22

2008015387

Copyright © 2009 Bearport Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher.

For more information, write to Bearport Publishing Company, Inc., 101 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6R, New York, New York 10003. Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents



A Surprise in the Dark.....	4
Meet the Scientists	6
A Very Odd Animal	8
An Evil Omen.....	10
Almost Extinct	12
Tough to Track.....	14
Like No Other Primate	16
A Special Finger.....	18
Finding Food	20
Learning from Aye-Ayes	22
New Babies.....	24
The Future for Aye-Ayes.....	26
 Aye-Aye Facts	 28
More Uncommon Animals.....	29
Glossary	30
Bibliography.....	31
Read More	31
Learn More Online.....	31
Index	32
About the Author.....	32

A Surprise in the Dark

It was evening in northeastern Madagascar. Eleanor Sterling and Alison Jolly had been traveling through the **rain forest** all day. The two American scientists were looking for monkey-like animals called **lemurs**. Suddenly, they saw something move.



About 60 kinds of lemurs live in Madagascar. Lemurs exist in the wild only in Madagascar and nearby islands.



A shadowy figure ran across a palm tree branch and grabbed a coconut. Alison turned on her head lamp. The women saw a small animal with black-and-silver fur and huge shining eyes.

The strange creature chewed a hole in the coconut. Then it stuck a long bony finger inside and started pulling out some of the white fruit. Eleanor and Alison knew that only one type of lemur ate like that—the **rare** aye-aye (EYE-eye)!

The aye-aye is about the size of a house cat.



Meet the Scientists

Biologists Eleanor Sterling and Alison Jolly had met up in Madagascar in the late 1980s. Both had come to the island to study its uncommon animals. Many of these creatures, including aye-ayes, live nowhere else in the world. Alison had been studying wildlife in Madagascar since 1963, but Eleanor had just started her studies.

Alison Jolly (right) has studied many different kinds of lemurs, including the ring-tailed lemur.



Eleanor Sterling focused her studies on one kind of lemur—the aye-aye.

Eleanor first learned about aye-ayes and other types of lemurs in college. She remembered how her teacher had “danced across the stage **mimicking** a lemur jumping from tree to tree.”

Eleanor became very curious about these unusual creatures. So she traveled to Madagascar to learn more about them, especially the aye-aye.

Aye-Ayes in the Wild



Index

- Ako the Aye-Aye* 22
- captive births 24–25
- claws 16
- eyes 5, 9, 15, 17, 28
- fingers 5, 16, 18–19, 20–21, 28
- food 5, 11, 17, 19, 20–21, 28–29
- forests 4, 7, 13, 15, 24, 27, 28–29
- fossa 29
- habitat 6–7, 13, 27, 28
- Jolly, Alison 4–5, 6, 19, 22
- larvae 20–21, 28
- lemurs 4–5, 6–7, 9, 11, 25, 29
- length 28–29
- life span 28–29
- Madagascar 4, 6–7, 10, 12–13, 22, 24–25, 26–27, 28–29
- Nosy Mangabe 12
- omen 10–11, 27
- population 11, 26, 28
- primates 9, 16–17, 28–29
- pygmy mouse lemur 29
- rain forests 4, 13, 15, 24
- reserves 12, 27
- rodents 17
- seeing colors 23
- Sterling, Eleanor 4–5, 6–7, 8, 13, 14–15, 16–17, 19, 21, 22–23, 26
- teeth 8, 17
- weight 28–29
- zoos 24

About the Author

Miriam Aronin is a writer and editor. She also enjoys reading, knitting, and visiting unusual animals at the zoo.



[Intentionally Left Blank]



Aye-Aye

An Evil Omen

For hundreds of years, a mysterious creature called the aye-aye struck fear into the hearts of people on the island of Madagascar. According to legend, if someone saw this odd-looking animal, a person would soon die. As a result, these small creatures were killed to prevent them from causing harm. Unfortunately, little was really known about the aye-aye. Scientist Eleanor Sterling wanted to change that. In the 1980s, she traveled to Madagascar to study these rare animals. Would she finally discover the truth about this mysterious and misunderstood creature?

Arctic Fox
Very Cool!

Fossa
A Fearsome Predator

Tasmanian Devil
Nighttime Scavenger

Aye-Aye
An Evil Omen

Platypus
A Century-long Mystery

Weddell Seal
Fat and Happy

BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

www.bearportpublishing.com

ISBN-10: 1-59716-731-2
ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-731-4



9 781597 167314