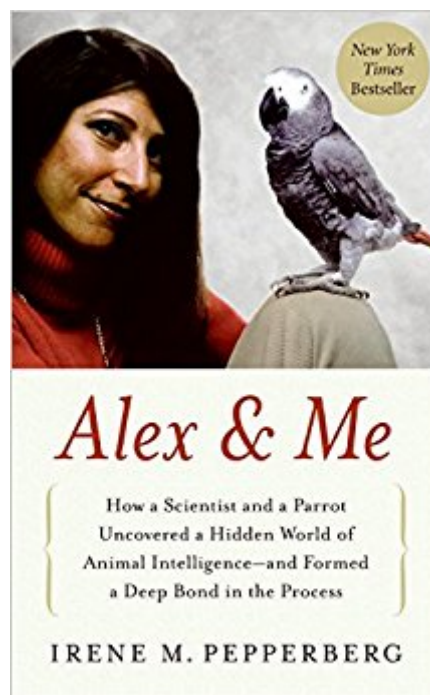


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Alex & Me: How A Scientist And A Parrot Uncovered A Hidden World Of Animal Intelligence--and Formed A Deep Bond In The Process



Synopsis

Alex & Me is the remarkable true story of an extraordinary relationship between psychologist Irene M. Pepperberg and Alex, an African Grey parrot who proved scientists and accepted wisdom wrong by demonstrating an astonishing ability to communicate and understand complex ideas. A New York Times bestseller and selected as one of *the paper's* critics' Top Ten Books of the Year, Alex & Me is much more than the story of an incredible scientific breakthrough. It's a poignant love story and an affectionate remembrance of Pepperberg's irascible, unforgettable, and always surprising best friend.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Alex is the African gray parrot whose ability to master a vocabulary of more than 100 words and answer questions about the color, shape and number of objects "garnered wide notice during his life as well as obituaries in worldwide media after his death in September 2007. Pepperberg, who teaches animal cognition, has previously documented the results of her 30-year relationship with Alex in *The Alex Studies*. While this book inevitably covers some of the same ground, it is a moving tribute that beautifully evokes the struggles, the initial triumphs, the setbacks, the unexpected and often stunning achievements during a groundbreaking scientific endeavor spent uncovering cognitive abilities in Alex that no one believed were possible, and challenging science's deepest assumptions about the origin of human cognitive abilities. Pepperberg deftly interweaves her own personal narrative "including her struggles to gain recognition for her research" with more intimate

scenes of life with Alex than she was able to present in her earlier work, creating a story that scientists and laypeople can equally enjoy, if they can all keep from crying over Alex's untimely death. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Alex, an African gray parrot, died suddenly in his 30s and was mourned the world over. Pepperberg, Alex's owner and researcher, limns the importance of Alex's life and her work with him on the subjects of intelligence, cognition, and language. Pepperberg started her academic career pursuing a doctorate in chemistry, but she changed her focus to animal communication. Choosing to work with an African gray, due to their reputations as clear talkers, the author had the pet store choose a bird for her so that the choice would be random. The result was Alex, a parrot that would forever change the way science looked at the cognitive abilities of birds. In this highly readable, anecdotal book, Pepperberg describes the training techniques she and her assistants used with Alex, the breakthroughs he made, and his growing fame as word began to spread about the brainy parrot who could differentiate colors, count, and describe objects accurately and in human language. The flip side of Alex's fame was the resistance Pepperberg faced from the entrenched scientific community. --Nancy Bent

What an amazing journey! I lived with a Grey back in the mid 70's, wish I had know more about parrots at the time. I was a teen just out of high school, dad bought him because he always wanted one. Romeo (who later became Juliet 4 years later when she laid eggs) was creative and playful. And I've learned since then that she loved me, I didn't understand her behavior fully, there was no internet back then so i had to surmise her actions were positive towards me. She too liked to play games, such as the time I had just installed a smoke detector in the hallway outside my bathroom. her cage was about 10 feet away in the kitchen but in view of that hallway. I was in the shower when the detector went off, i was home alone. I panicked and jumped out of the shower and went into the hallway where the alarm was not going off. I was perplexed until about a minute later. Juliet imitated the alarm and followed that up with a laugh! It took her one day to learn the sound and she thought it was funny that I reacted! Smart bird. There are more things that she did too. I miss her. Thanks for taking the time to write this book, it brought back memories while learning about the intelligence, which we know better today exists in all living creatures.

Great story about a remarkable bird. The author's relationship with Alex is heartwarming and

winningly told. The things she and Alex accomplished are amazing. I liked how well she treated her birds and that she makes clear these intelligent creatures should not be left alone as solitary pets. Her research changed the way people think about birds. After reading this I watched Alex videos on YouTube.

This beautiful story lets us know how intelligent and loving these birds are. But to fully appreciate them, we should let them be free in the wild. They've been evolving for millions of years to fly above the jungle and socialize with their peers. The same way we feel good when we use our arms and legs, and socialize with fellow humans because of our internal reward system that has been developing for thousands of generations, they are rewarded when they fly high and hang out with fellow greys. That being said, if you're thinking about buying a parrot, buy this book instead. You'll be happier and you'll liberate yourself from the desire of keeping captive such an intelligent individual that was born to fly free.

I'm interested in birds and spend time feeding and watching their behavior. But my brother has an African Gray with a complex personality and my brother's stories regarding him are fascinating to me. This book furthered my knowledge and interest in the need of continued scientific study of these amazing creatures with tiny almond sized brains that have great capacities and gifts to share.

Alex, the wise guy; Alex, the joker; Alex, the sometimes bored and resistant subject. Irene, the cross-disciplinary scientist with a quirky feathered being as principal research focus, trying to find a fit, a home, in typically rigid academic boxes. These are a few of my favorite things in reading Dr. Pepperberg's account of her life with Alex, the African Grey Parrot. *Alex and Me* opens and closes with the premature and unanticipated death of one of two main characters, hitting us with an emotional jolt that destroys any pre-conception that we're about to read a volume that limits itself to a popularized recounting of a set of surprising and interesting scientific research findings. Throughout, Pepperberg's provides an entertaining and humanize account of her career with Alex: his display of many cognitive skills thought impossible in any such small-brained, non-mammalian subject; her professional challenges in building a niche for her studies with Alex; the trappings of growing public admiration, even love, for Alex contrasted with the constant struggles to find acceptance, employment, and research-funding to continue her work with Alex and his lab companions, both avian and human. I found this an entertaining, informative read easily absorbed during a week long vacation trip. Well worth the read, if you, too, marvel and the abilities

underestimated abilities of so many of the critters with whom we share the planet. Enjoy!

This is a wonderful book that describes the scientific studies of the author. However, it is, more importantly, a love story between a human and an animal. It made complete sense to me and moved me to tears. I, too, have a bird that lived with me, so I readily identified with them. Birds, animals!, are so intelligent. Just because they aren't exactly like us humans really means nothing. No humans are exactly alike either. We are all part of the natural world. Animals are better than humans in many ways. A huge way they are better is that they do not contrive to control the world with a desire to always have and take more and more than any other creatures. That's become the biggest unnatural problem, along with organised religion, on this earth, in my opinion. And, of course, human overpopulation.

This is the admirable backstory of everyone's favorite parrot and his dedicated trainer, who was undeterred by thirty years of professional and financial setbacks and just kept going with her groundbreaking research. Alex is as personable as he is smart, and Dr. Pepperberg is a profile in scientific courage. Together they have put a major dent in one more of the barriers assumed to exist between human beings and all others.

What an amazing story, don't miss reading this book! The journey of Irene and Alex's life together is so moving and inspiring, and yet another confirmation of how much we can learn from our animal friends. I could not put the book down, and when I did I was watching them on you tube videos. It's a beautiful story and so very sad when Alex passed. I fell in love with Alex, what a delightful read!

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