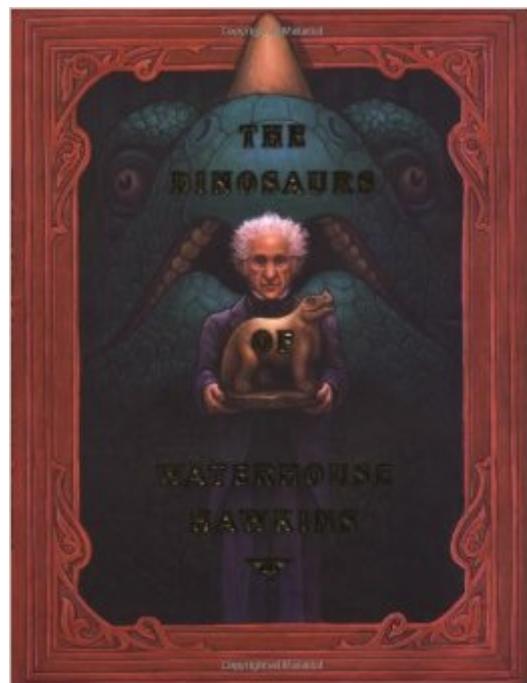


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The Dinosaurs Of Waterhouse Hawkins (Caldecott Honor Book)



Synopsis

Can you fathom that until the mid 1800s almost nobody knew what a dinosaur was? When Victorian artist Waterhouse Hawkins built the first life-size models of dinosaurs in England, he dazzled the world with his awe-inspiring creations. This book tells his story.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 550L (What's this?)

Series: Caldecott Honor Book

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Press; Library Binding edition (October 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0439114942

ISBN-13: 978-0439114943

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 9.5 x 12.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (40 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #283,684 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #142 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art #446 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Animals > Dinosaurs #541 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Historical

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Occasionally, from time to time, I like to trick little children. And as a children's librarian in a public library, I have plenty of time and opportunity to do so. So when I'm in the right mood and I feel particularly devilish, I mosey on over to the biography section of the library and ever-so-casually pull out "The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins". After determining that no one has seen me, I then amble over to the picture book area and prominently display the book. The bait now laid, I go back to my desk and wait in anticipation. It doesn't take long. Soon the attractive cover of the book (showing a man holding a dinosaur model with a gigantic dinosaur head looming behind him) catches the eye of some wayward traipsing tot. The child will look at it, squeal gleefully, and pluck the item from the shelf without so much as a howdy-doo. My job complete, I sit back and soak in just how clever I am. You see, the kid doesn't know it yet, but I've tricked 'em. They thought they were finding just another of the thousands of millions of dinosaur books out there WHEN IN FACT this

book is different. It is a highly educational biography of the man who helped bring dinosaurs to the forefront of the human imagination. The book may well be many a child's first biography for this very reason. So while they think they're getting another dino book, they are in fact getting an entirely different critter altogether. It's an incredibly satisfying feeling to get a child to read something quite as good and original as this particular book. I do not regret my actions in the least. Author Barbara Kerley explains in her afterword where she got the gumption to write about Waterhouse Hawkins in the first place. She was flipping through a book of dinosaurs one day when she came across a most peculiar picture. In it sat a group of refined late 1800s gentlemen having a formal dinner. In the belly of a dinosaur. Further research yielded a name and a fascinating story. Waterhouse Hawkins was born in London in 1807. He grew up with an interest in animalia, but with the discovery of dinosaur bones he quickly shifted his interests. As an artist, Hawkins worked diligently to create true to life full-sized dinosaur models. Though we today look at them with a critical eye (they had some real innate flaws to them) at the time they were considered the cutting edge of scientific vision. Hawkins grew in prominence (in no small part due to the aforementioned let's-eat-dinner-in-a-dinosaur idea) and even created a group of them for the grand opening of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham Park. Unfortunately, once Hawkins moved to America he was bound to come into contact with that nefarious New York politician, the corruptous of the corrupt, "Boss" Tweed. Though Hawkins had been given funding to construct a museum of dinosaurs in Central Park, Tweed diverted funds and (adding injury to insult) probably hired a group of goons to destroy Hawkins' models. But did our intrepid expatriate give in even then? No, sir! He went on to create the development of life on Earth at Princeton and made dinosaurs for the Smithsonian. By the time he died he'd lived a rich and wonderful life. Barbara Kerley backs up all her interesting Hawkins info with a remarkable Author's Note section at the end of the book encompassing the models, the artist, Tweed, the Crystal Palace, as well as illustrator Brian Selznick's works. And the text is remarkably interesting. In fact, it closes by pointing out that because Boss Tweed's goons buried many of Hawkins' models, they may still be located somewhere deep beneath Central Park to this day. Brian Selznick is just as laudable an artist in this venture though. First of all, the book is presented as a kind of 1800s document. The title page is part announcement to a theatrical presentation part scholarly text. At the end of the book we can see the original menu feasted upon by Hawkins and his scientific cronies in the belly of one of his models. The book is perhaps most remarkable because of its dark moments. And it is here that Selznick really shines. Our encounter with Boss Tweed shows a gray formal portrait of the man with watery malicious eyes. After the destruction of his creations there's a remarkable two-page spread of Hawkins holding his head in sorrow in the midst of complete and utter destruction. The next

pages show a rainy windswept Central Park with a single black figure making his way across the expanse. Heck! There's even a section at the back of the book showing how Hawkins once drew his dinos and how we know they look today. The most difficult task of any biographical picture book is make the subject both interesting and factual. Kerley and Selznick have done this with aplomb. And unlike some life stories transferred to a mere 48 pages or so, this book has a distinctive rise and fall to the action. All in all it's a remarkable story in an attractive package that any small child could instantly take to. One of the best picture book biographies I have ever had the delight to read. A must-have for any dino-addled child.

"Can you fathom a time when almost no one in the world knew what a dinosaur looked like?" Well, back in the mid-eighteen hundreds, that was just the case. Archeologists and paleontologists had found dinosaur fossils and bits and pieces of their skeletons, but no one had actually drawn or created a model of what one might have really looked like. Enter Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins. He had always had a passion for drawing and sculpting animals, and now as an adult, realized his dream project, commissioned by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, of building life sized dinosaur statues for all the world to see..... Take a little biography and science, add some mystery, history, humor and suspense, and you have the makings of one intriguing and captivating story. Barbara Kerley and Brian Selznick take us from England to America and back with this thrilling and unique story about this special man of vision. Ms Kerley's detailed text is exciting, thoughtful, and inspiring, and beautifully complemented by Mr Selznick's dazzling and intricate illustrations. Together word and art create a vivid and lasting picture of a man who followed his dream through both triumph and disaster. Fascinating end notes are as entertaining as the story, enhance and augment learning and should open the door to interesting lessons and discussions. Perfect for youngsters 8-12, The Dinosaurs Of Waterhouse Hawkins is a treasure to be savored and enjoyed each and every time it's read.

What is most amazing about this delightful true tale is the skillful way that Brian Selznick has captured the excitement of the story in his remarkable illustrations. This book will surely be mentioned when Caldecott time rolls around. We especially like the rich colors and the incredible scene of Waterhouse's dinner party in the dinosaur. The story is quirky and funny. Kids love it, and adults find it a fascinating anecdote to history.

I purchased this as a gift for my four year old Grandson and found myself fasinated with the book.

The story, although true, was new to me. I was entranced with not only the narrative but also the great and colorful art work. This is a book for all ages and I predict it will become a classic for those of us who marvel at the number of and various sizes of the different dinosaurs. A perfect gift for that Dinosaur-loving Child in your life. Beverly J Scott author of Righteous Revenge

This is the finely illustrated story of Waterhouse Hawkins, who gained world renown through his life-sized sculptures of dinosaurs. His interpretation of what dinosaurs looked like shaped the vision of these creatures in the minds of many generations to follow. The book not only relates the triumph and tragedy of Hawkins' life, it also describes the interesting process he used to make his sculptures. This is a great addition to any personal or school library.

There are very few biographies out there for young children that capture their interest. My 8 year old daughter chose this book for her biography book report, was entranced by it and by the subject -- Bejamin Waterhouse Hawkins. Surprisingly I was also intigued by the book, found the illustrations magnificent and the story "stranger than fiction". Kudos!

Selznick and Kerley have created a truly wonderful childrens book. We need more books like this revealing to young readers in such a wonderful way the many fascinating stories from the world of paleontology. There are thousands of dinosaur books for kids, many of which are excellent (and many of which simply are not) but not many like this. I love books that take a closer look at single individuals and their achievements within the larger context of their times. The author and illustrator have done a wonderful job of conveying to the reader what it must have been like when the concept of the dinosaur was just being born. I can't say enough about this gorgeous book so I'll just shut up after imploring you to buy this whether you have kids or not (but especially if you do)!

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