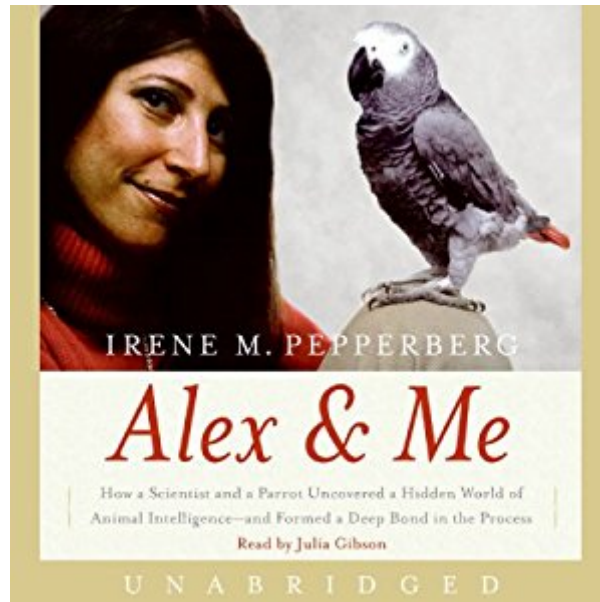


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Alex & Me



Synopsis

On September 6, 2007, an African Grey parrot named Alex died prematurely at age thirty-one. His last words to his owner, Irene Pepperberg, were "You be good. I love you." What would normally be a quiet, very private event was, in Alex's case, headline news. Over the thirty years they had worked together, Alex and Irene had become famous—two pioneers who opened an unprecedented window into the hidden yet vast world of animal minds. Alex's brain was the size of a shelled walnut, and when Irene and Alex first met, birds were not believed to possess any potential for language, consciousness, or anything remotely comparable to human intelligence. Yet, over the years, Alex proved many things. He could add. He could sound out words. He understood concepts like bigger, smaller, more, fewer, and none. He was capable of thought and intention. Together, Alex and Irene uncovered a startling reality: We live in a world populated by thinking, conscious creatures. The fame that resulted was extraordinary. Yet there was a side to their relationship that never made the papers. They were emotionally connected to one another. They shared a deep bond far beyond science. Alex missed Irene when she was away. He was jealous when she paid attention to other parrots, or even people. He liked to show her who was boss. He loved to dance. He sometimes became bored by the repetition of his tests, and played jokes on her. Sometimes they sniped at each other. Yet nearly every day, they each said, "I love you." Alex and Irene stayed together through thick and thin—despite sneers from experts, extraordinary financial sacrifices, and a nomadic existence from one university to another. The story of their thirty-year adventure is equally a landmark of scientific achievement and of an unforgettable human-animal bond. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 5 hours and 39 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: HarperAudio

Audible.com Release Date: October 29, 2008

Language: English

ASIN: B001JPMOMW

Best Sellers Rank: #15 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Pets & Animal Care > Birds

#31 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Lifestyle & Home > Animal Care & Pets #39

Customer Reviews

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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