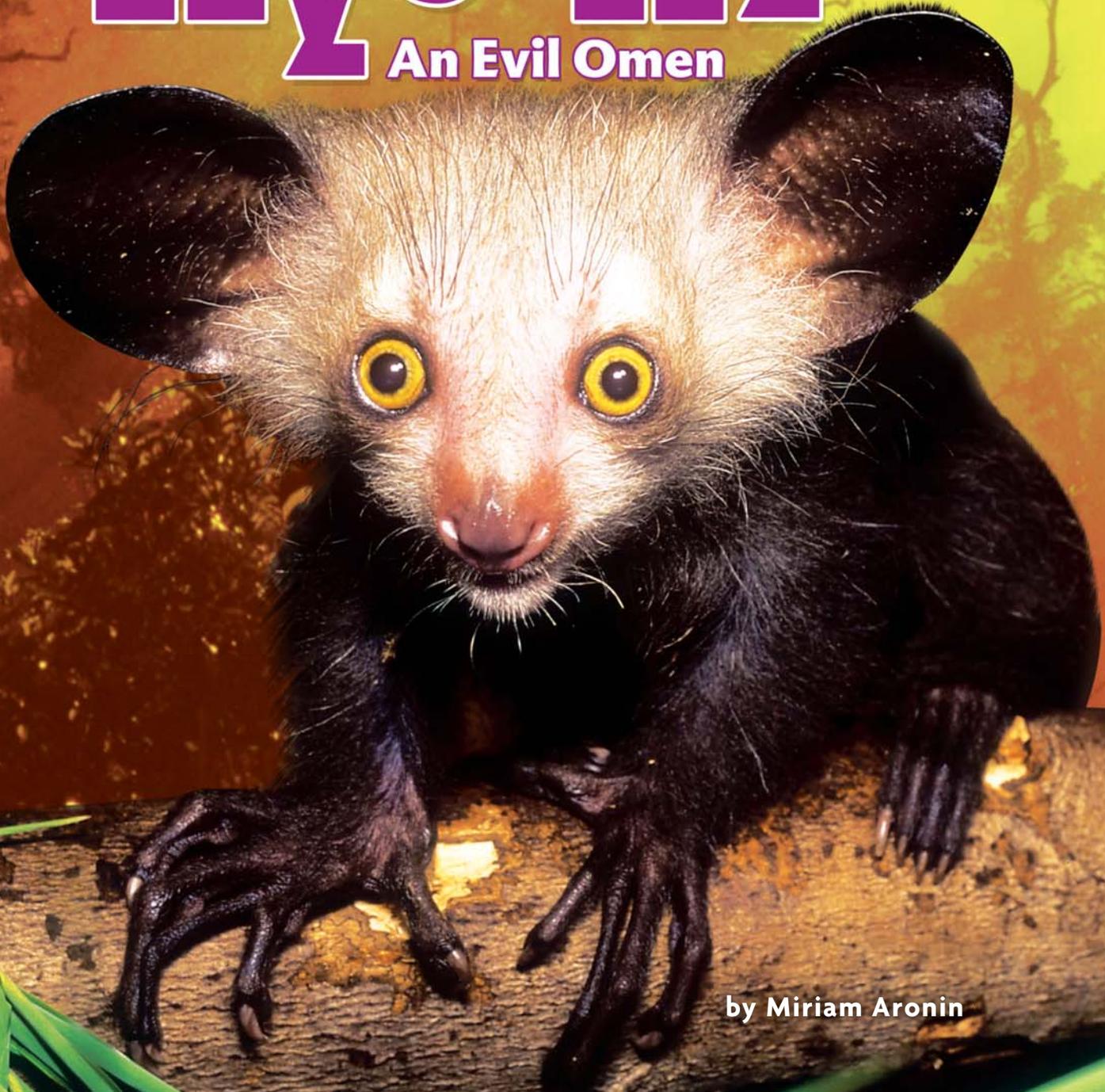


Uncommon  
Animals

# Aye-Aye

An Evil Omen



by Miriam Aronin

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UP common  
*Animals*

# Aye-Aye

An Evil Omen



by Miriam Aronin

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

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# 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.

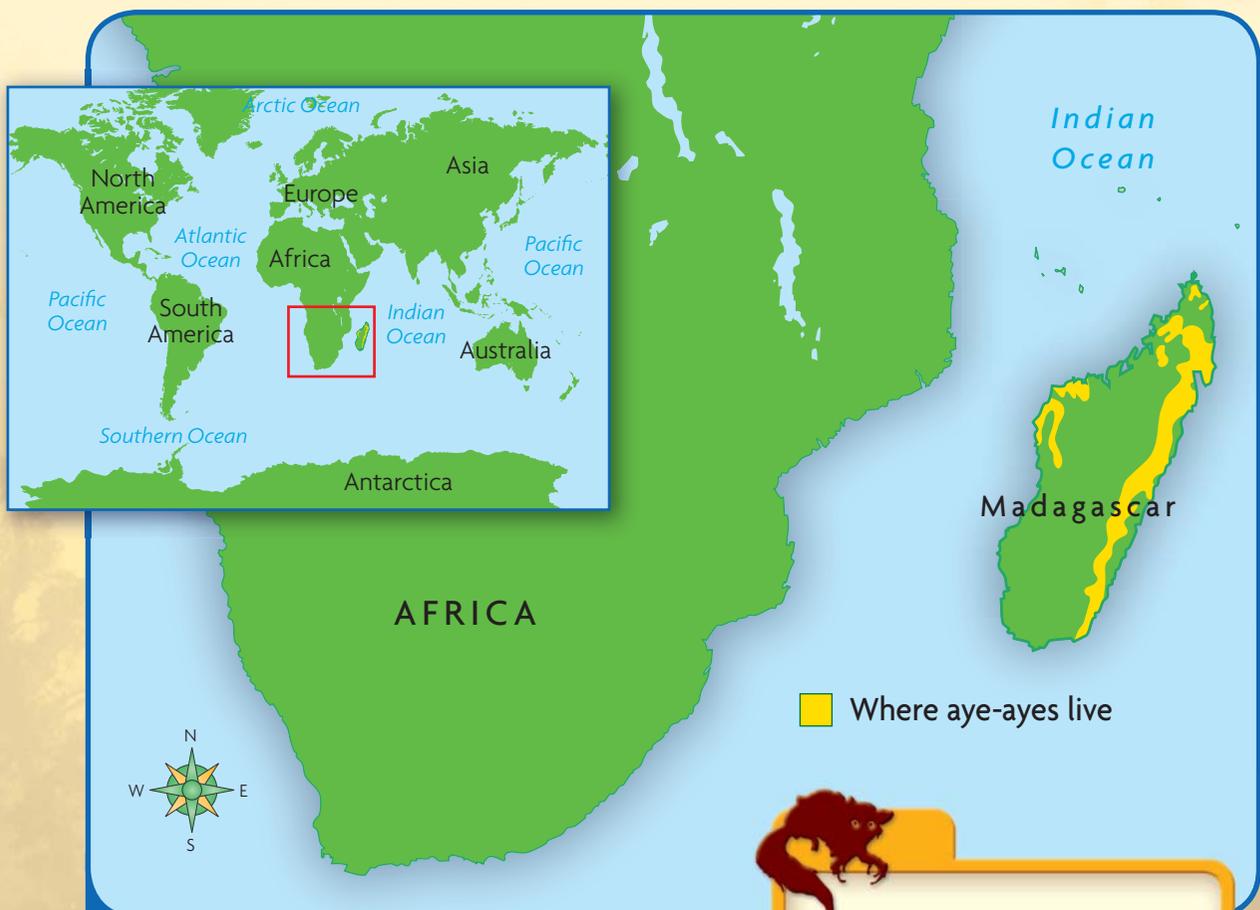


Eleanor Sterling focused her studies on one kind of lemur—the aye-aye.

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



**Madagascar is the fourth-largest island in the world. This African country is located off the southeast coast of Africa.**

Aye-ayes live only in the forests of the African island of Madagascar.

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## About the Author

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



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UP common  
Animals

# 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

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