

Mammals Who Morph: The Universe Tells Our Evolution Story

Jennifer Morgan

Dana Lynne Andersen, Illustrator

Dawn Publications (September 2006)

Unknown \$19.95 (45pp)

978-1-58469-084-9

Thirteen billion years ago in a galaxy not far away, the infant Universe was a swirling cloud of hydrogen. Then a star exploded, and life has never been the same.

The Universe narrates this story about Earth's creation and evolution. She describes early animal life, such as dinosaurs, rabbit-sized camels, and elephants with teeth on their trunks. When a meteor strikes Earth and kills the dinosaurs, the other mammals survive and "morph" or evolve) into forms adaptable to the new planet. The book discusses Earth DNA; rain forest proliferation; and how hominids discovered fire and developed language, tools, and intelligence.

The illustrations beautifully set the mood and tone. Early atmosphere scenes depict yellow-and-orange swirls of gaseous clouds, with scattered fragments of animal life drawn in dark hues of brown and gray. A deep blue-and-purple backdrop represents the darkness; when the sun appears, the backdrop changes to red and yellow, highlighting budding green rainforest plants and new animals.

The award-winning author holds a degree in theology. This is the third and final volume in her series about the universe; the first won *Learning Magazine's* Teacher's Choice Award, and received the highest possible review ratings from the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The illustrator is a multimedia artist and teacher whose paintings represent the energy forces that underlie life matter. With a philosophy degree, she founded the Awakening Arts Institute for artists who use art to uplift the human spirit.

Here, the first-person, Mother-Universe narration makes a great story vehicle: "When I was an infant universe, 13 billion years ago, there were no eyes to see," she says. "Your Earth is one of my most creative planets." There is a dense supply of educational content, for example, a timeline—in million-year increments—is displayed across the top of each page. At the bottom, key concepts like molecular-versus-fossil research, symbolic thought, and the rise of classical religions are noted, with references to the appendix. A glossary with photographs and a book and media list are included. An interesting addition is a letter from the author addressing the question, "Where's God in the story?"

Readers young and old will be intrigued and informed by this science-based tale from Mother Universe.

ANGELA BLACK (October 5, 2006)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The author of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the author for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.