

# An evolutionary tale of moths and men: the untold story of science and the peppered moth.

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Title: An Evolutionary Tale of Moths and Men: The Untold Story of Science and the Peppered Moth

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An Evolutionary Tale OF MOTHS AND MEN: The Untold Story of Science and the Peppered Moth By Judith Hooper W.W. Norton & Co., 2002 408 pp., \$26.95 ISBN 0-393-05121-8 [ILLUSTRATION OMITTED] I consider this to be a great book, and I recommend it. It is a work of nonfiction, yet it has all the suspense of a great mystery novel. Like The Da Vinci Code, powerful forces are pitted against each other. Atheists vs. creationists, intelligent design vs. Darwinism, intelligentsia of the Biology Department of Oxford University vs. unfunded, iconoclastic professors at American Universities, scientific dogma vs. the truth (that we just don't know), and ethology vs. population geneticists. It is a complex and well-told story. In the moth, we have a very interesting protagonist. Moths have very complex life cycles and mating habits. They are nocturnal creatures, so that different sensory systems are advantageous to survival, and where and how they spend their daytime has been the subject of controversy. The author, Judith

Hooper, does an excellent job of telling the story sequentially, like a good mystery. She discloses the backgrounds of the human antagonists in such detail that you feel you really know them and understand the consistency and quirks of their behavior. Most importantly, she has an excellent understanding of the science, the scientific methodology, rules of academic in-fighting and professional power struggles, the politics and philosophy of evolution, intelligent design, and she expertly weaves it all into her narrative. A Brief Chronology: 1848: The first black mutant form of the peppered moth, *B. betularia* is found in Manchester England, a site of heavy industrial pollution. Trees in urban areas had become blackened by soot from coal burning industries. 1859: Darwin publishes...

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