

[PDF] Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story About Brain Science

John Fleischman - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Science writer John Fleischman uses a clipped, engaging expository style to tell the incredible story of the railroad worker who, in 1848, survived the piercing blast of a 13-pound iron rod as it entered below his cheekbone and exited the front of his skull in Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science. Photographs, glossary, a resource listing and index lend this textbook case the same sense of immediacy as do the words.

From School Library Journal Gr 5 Up-The fascinating story of the construction foreman who survived for 10 years after a 13-pound iron rod shot through his brain. Fleischman relates Gage's "horrible accident" and the subsequent events in the present tense, giving immediacy to the text. He avoids sensationalizing by letting the events themselves carry the impact. The straightforward description of Gage calmly chatting on a porch 30 minutes after the accident, for example, comes across as horrifying and amazing. The author presents scientific background in a conversational style and jumps enthusiastically into such related topics as phrenology, 19th-century medical practices, and the history of microbiology. He shows how Gage's misfortune actually played an intriguing and important role in the development of our knowledge of the brain. The present-tense narrative may cause occasional confusion, since it spans several time periods and dates are not always immediately apparent from the text. Illustrations include historical photographs; one showing the iron bar posed dramatically next to Gage's skull is particularly impressive. Other photos and diagrams help explain the workings of the brain. The work of Gage expert Malcolm Macmillan, cited in the list of resources, seems the likely main source for the quotes and details of Gage's life, but this is not clearly spelled out in the text or appendixes. Like Penny Colman's *Corpses, Coffins, and Crypts* (Holt, 1997) and James M. Deem's *Bodies from the Bog* (Houghton, 1998), Phineas Gage brings a scientific viewpoint to a topic that will be delightfully gruesome to many readers.

Steven Engelfried, Beaverton City Library, OR

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