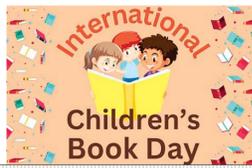


Celebrating the Magic of Stories for Young Minds



Observed every year on April 2, International Children's Book Day celebrates the joy of reading and highlights the importance of books in shaping young minds. The day commemorates the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen, the renowned Danish author known for timeless fairy tales such as *The Little Mermaid* and *The Ugly Duckling*. Established by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in 1967, the occasion encourages children around the world to develop a love for reading. Schools, libraries, and literary groups mark the day through storytelling sessions, book fairs, and reading activities that inspire creativity and imagination among young readers.

#CLOTHING

Dongri To Dungaree

The Origin of Dungaree : An Indian Textile That Shaped Global Workwear



Dungaree, a word now commonly associated with rugged workwear and casual fashion, has its origins firmly rooted in India, specifically in the western coastal regions of the subcontinent. Long before it became a staple of modern wardrobes, dungaree was a sturdy cotton fabric developed by Indian weavers and exported across the world through maritime trade.

Dungaree: From Dongri to the World

The term 'dungaree' is widely believed to derive from Dongri, a harbor area near Mumbai (then Bombay). During the 17th and 18th centuries, Dongri was an important port under British colonial rule and a hub for textile trade. Indian artisans in this region produced a coarse, thick cotton cloth known locally for its strength and durability. British traders adopted the fabric and anglicized its name to 'dungaree'.

This Indian-made fabric was especially valued for making garments for sailors, dockworkers, and labourers because it could withstand rough use, frequent washing, and harsh working conditions.

Fabric Before Fashion

Originally, dungaree was not a garment but a fabric, a tough, plain-woven or twill cotton cloth, often dyed with natural indigo or left in earthy tones. Indian weavers had centuries of expertise in producing strong cotton textiles, and dungaree was one of many utilitarian fabrics created for everyday use rather than luxury.

The British East India Company exported dungaree fabric to Europe and later to the Americas, where it became popular for making work trousers, uniforms, and protective clothing. Its affordability and resilience made it ideal for labour-intensive environments.

Dungaree and Colonial Trade

By the 18th century, dungaree had become widely used by British sailors and plantation workers. It was also adopted for making clothing for enslaved labourers in the Caribbean and the American South due to its low cost and durability, an uncomfortable but important chapter in its global spread. In the United States, dungaree fabric evolved into a term not just for the cloth, but for work garments themselves, especially loose-fitting overalls and trousers designed for manual labour.

From Indian Fabric to Global Garment

As industrialization expanded in the 19th century, dungaree garments became closely associated with miners, farmers, and factory workers. When combined with innovations such as reinforced stitching and metal rivets, later popularized in denim trousers, dungarees became synonymous with hardworking, practical clothing.

Over time, the word 'dungaree' shifted in meaning. In Britain and parts of Europe, it continued to refer to the fabric, while in the United States, it came to describe workwear garments, including overalls and casual trousers.

Legacy and Cultural Significance

Today, dungarees are worn worldwide as both functional clothing and fashion statements. Yet, their Indian origins are often overlooked. The journey of dungaree, from Dongri's cotton looms to global workwear, reflects India's immense influence on the history of textiles and everyday clothing. Dungaree stands as a reminder that many garments now considered Western staples were born from Indian craftsmanship and global trade networks. What began as a humble cotton fabric in India became the foundation for durable clothing that shaped modern workwear across the world.



A Brazilian keelback (*Helicops infrataeniatus*) cannibalizes another in 2015.

• Verna Mohan

Snakes can inspire fear, fascination and revulsion. Some carry deadly venom while others could squeeze the life out of an adult human and swallow them whole. But new research has uncovered another reason to make people with a snake phobia squirm: widespread evidence of a penchant for cannibalism.

Many snakes will prey on snakes of other species, but cannibalism specifically refers to when an animal eats one of its own. While people have seen the reptiles cannibalize each other on occasion, researchers had never taken stock of how often this happens. "Going from a few scattered reports to compiling more than 500 documented events was honestly astonishing," says Bruna Falcão, a master's student at the University of São Paulo in Brazil, who conducted the research as an undergraduate at the University of São Carlos. "Each new record reinforced the idea that cannibalism in snakes is not an anomaly or a rare curiosity, but a widespread and ecologically relevant behaviour that we had been systematically underestimating."

During a summer internship in 2022, Falcão came across a pre-

served Brazilian lancehead viper with a juvenile of the same species in its stomach in a zoological collection. Intrigued, she began combing through literature for reported incidences of cannibalism in snakes. She examined everything from peer-reviewed studies to excerpts of books and magazines; the oldest record dated back to 1892, when a common kingsnake in the United States was described cannibalizing another. The comprehensive review took more than two years.

In research published in November in *Biological Reviews*, Falcão and her team uncovered 503 cases of reported cannibalism in at least 207 snake species. They loosely divided these cases into different types of cannibalism, such as between mating pairs, related individuals or combating males, as well as different types of snakes. The incidents were spread widely, both in terms of geography and taxonomy, suggesting multiple origins of the behaviour.

"Cannibalism may have arisen independently in the snake evolutionary tree at least 11 times," says study co-author Omar Entiauspe-Neto, a PhD student at the University of São Paulo.

A snake-eat-snake world

Animals that eat snakes are called ophiophagous, with examples among species of lizards, birds and

Snakes Can Also Be Cannibals

The only major snake group without any records of cannibalism was that of the blind snakes. This group is derived from a fairly old lineage that never evolved the unfused lower jaw that allows most serpents to bite off more than they could necessarily chew, so to speak. This is likely the limiting factor that constrains these snakes from cannibalizing their peers, Entiauspe-Neto says.



A black-headed python in Australia consumes another of its species in a rare event caught on camera in the wild in 2023.

#THE WILD

mammals. Cannibalism is a type of ophiophagy among snakes, though ophiophagous snakes often prey on other species.

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Among the least surprising groups found to eat others of their species were the elapids, a group of snakes that includes cobras and kraits, many of which specialize in preying on other snakes as it is. Elapids were responsible for about 19 per cent of the recorded cannibalism events.

Max Jones, a conservation scientist who is starting a new role at Galápagos Conservancy and wasn't involved in the recent research, has documented this in northern king cobras. In January 2019, his team was monitoring two snakes in northeastern Thailand with implanted tracking devices when the signals intersected. After a

time, he says, "both signals happened to move away together." Follow-up fieldwork revealed that a larger male had consumed a smaller female.

Jones, who has studied ritualistic cobra combat, says that while cannibalism is likely not very common in cobras, it could happen when two cobras that meet have a big difference in size. He puts the situation he experienced down to a question of misplaced interest, the season had been uncharacteristically warm, perhaps prompting the female to look for a mate. Then, it suddenly got cold again by the time she encountered the male, so, when he found her, he was probably more in the mood for eating than mating. "It was a shame," Jones says. "We really wanted to track that female."

Sometimes, the opposite happens, with female snakes eating males eager to mate. Green anacondas females are larger than males, and they're polyandrous, meaning several males mate with the same female. Harems of males will congregate in courtship, but sometimes, the female consumes them. Entiauspe-Neto says that this might be an adaptive strategy, where the female eats some of the smaller, inferior males to reduce

sperm competition. But it could also just be that she needs additional energy to produce the eggs fertilized by her various suitors. The most cannibalistic snakes found by the team were in the Colubridae family, the biggest family of snakes, which includes species like venomous boomslangs. Colubrids represented 29 per cent of all cannibalism reports. The authors suggest most of the cases in this family were related to stressors such as a lack of other food sources, since this family doesn't typically prey on snakes.

which are usually the ones that exhibit maternal care." Or it could be that the mother gains some energy from eating a few eggs, she may just be hungry.

Cannibalism might take other forms between snakes and their kin. "Siblings may prey on each other to reduce competition," Entiauspe-Neto says, though most of these records were observed in captivity.

That setting could create a bias in the study's findings. Forty-three per cent of cannibalism reports were about snakes in captivity, while the contexts of nearly a third were undetermined. "That dominated a lot of their results; most of them were in these captive settings," says Jones. Just the same, he describes the review as 'comprehensive.'

Falcão adds that some of the older reports, from the late 19th century through the mid-20th century, were dubious ecologically and ethically, dating from a different era in research. Scientists back then would sometimes starve captive snakes to see whether they would cannibalize each other eventually. Or they would put two snakes together with one prey item, she saw a report of one snake swallowing another by accident as they both tried to ingest the same prey in something like the horror story version of *Lady and the Tramp* sharing a noodle. "There

were no laws; people weren't talking about animal rights," Falcão says. "These practices raise questions about whether some of the species would be cannibalistic under natural conditions. A majority of the reports regarding vipers, the most cannibalistic snake group in the Americas, according to the study, were in captivity. And the authors suggest that most of the viper cannibalism was due to captivity-related stresses."

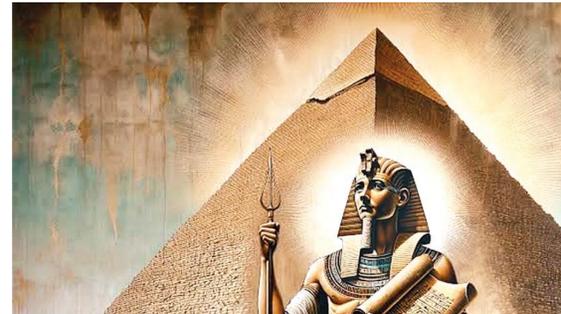
Harvey Lillywhite, a retired ecologist at the University of Florida, who wasn't involved in the research, describes the study as "comprehensive, well executed and generally well written." He hesitates to call cannibalism an evolved trait, though. "It seems to be an opportunistic and plastic behaviour that arises in multiple circumstances rather than a genetically 'fixed' character," he says. "Regardless, Falcão says this study is likely just the tip of the iceberg for cannibalism in snakes. "We're very aware that this number is still an underestimate," she says. "There are likely many 'hidden' records in older books, unpublished reports and museum archives, as well as observations from remote regions that are rarely documented in the scientific literature."

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#IMHOTEP

The Remarkable Neuroscience of Ancient Egypt

Imhotep understood the effects of spinal injuries, noting that damage to the spine could cause paralysed legs, that would be recognized by modern science over 3,000 years later

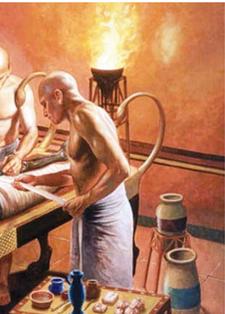


Over 3,600 years ago, long before the advent of modern medicine or neuroscience, the Egyptians were already performing remarkable medical procedures, including brain surgery. At the forefront of this knowledge was Imhotep, the legendary polymath, architect, and physician, whose insights into the

human body continue to astonish historians and scientists alike. Imhotep described the human brain in extraordinary detail: its folds, membranes, and fluid, all without the aid of microscopes, modern imaging, or surgical tools. His observations came purely from careful study, practical experience, and perhaps, the dissection of animals, a testament to his methodical

and analytical mind. In addition to describing the brain, Imhotep understood the effects of spinal injuries, noting that damage to the spine could cause paralyzed legs, a conclusion that would be formally recognized by modern neuroscience over 3,000 years later. How he made such accurate correlations without modern anatomy remains a subject of fascination

and debate. He also pioneered the use of honey as a treatment for wounds. Today, we know honey kills bacteria and prevents infection, but Imhotep applied it long before the germ theory of disease was conceived, relying on empirical results rather than scientific explanation. These achievements suggest that ancient Egyptian physicians

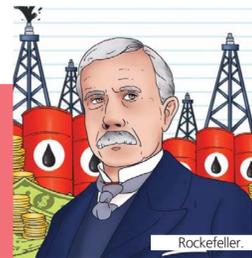


like Imhotep possessed advanced medical knowledge that was lost for centuries, blending observation, trial, and experience into practices that modern medicine is only now beginning to appreciate. From brain surgery to spinal understanding to natural antiseptics, Imhotep's work reminds us that human ingenuity and curiosity have deep roots.

#BLIGHT

Famous Cursed Families

Legacies which have been marred by losses, mysterious deaths, or patterns of bad luck: the Rockefellerers, Guinnesses, Wodeyars, and Kennedys



From royalty to billionaires, history is filled with stories of wealth, prestige, and tragedy. While success often puts a family in the spotlight, repeated misfortunes have led some to believe that even the most powerful bloodlines might be 'cursed.' Here are four families whose legacies have been marred by unexplained losses, mysterious deaths, or strange patterns of bad luck: the Rockefellerers, Guinnesses, Wodeyars, and Kennedys.



1. The Rockefellerers: Wealth with a Shadow

America's first billionaire, John D. Rockefeller, built a colossal oil empire and laid the foundation for a dynasty of wealth and philanthropy. Yet, despite their power and prestige, the Rockefeller family has faced an unsettling series of tragedies. In 1951, Michael Rockefeller, the 23-year-old son of New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, disappeared in New Guinea while collecting tribal art. He was presumed dead, and rumoured to have been killed by cannibals, though his fate remains a mystery.

Nelson Rockefeller himself died in 1979 under controversial circumstances, reportedly during an affair. Despite the wealth and status, the Guinness family's personal history is punctuated by misfortunes that seem to strike each generation, lending credibility to the idea of a hereditary curse, or at the very least, the isolating impact of high society.

3. The Wodeyars: A Royal Curse in Mysore

The Wodeyars, the royal family of the erstwhile princely state of Mysore, are said to have been cursed by a queen in the early 17th century, a curse that supposedly continues to this day.

Legend says that Queen Alamelamma, the wife of a defeated regional chieftain, cursed the Wodeyar dynasty before throwing herself into a river in 1612. Her curse reportedly declared: "May Talakadu become a barren land, Malagudi turn into a whirlpool, and the Wodeyars never have children!" Interestingly, almost every generation of Wodeyars has faced the issue of male heirs dying young or childlessness, often requiring adopted successors. The current scion, Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wodeyar, is an adopted son, continuing the 400-year-old tradition.

2. The Guinnesses: Beer, Fortune, and Misfortune

The Guinness family, founders of the world-famous brewery in Dublin, Ireland, built one of the most recognizable beverage brands in the world. But their private lives have been marred by mental illness, addiction, and a string of tragedies that have sparked whispers of a 'Guinness Curse.'

Tara Browne, heir to the Guinness fortune, died at age 21 in a car crash in 1966. He inspired the Beatles' song 'A Day in the Life.' Several members of the family, including Hon. Walter Guinness and Lady Henrietta Guinness, died by suicide.

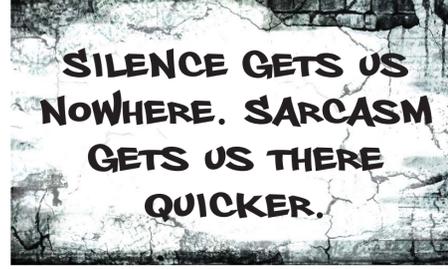
Others, like Patrick Guinness, struggled with depression and addiction. In 2020, Maveo Kennedy McKean and her 8-year-old son drowned in a canoe accident.

The sheer scale of tragedy in the Kennedy family, spanning over 90 years, has made the term 'Kennedy Curse' almost synonymous with the family name.

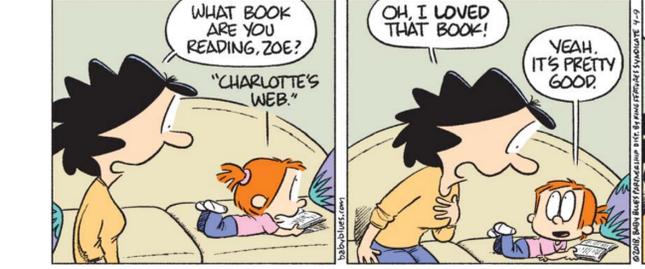
Coincidence or Curse?

Whether it's superstition, generational trauma, or the intense scrutiny that comes with fame, the idea of a 'family curse' still grips the imagination. The Rockefellerers, Guinnesses, Wodeyars, and Kennedys, though vastly different in culture and origin, all illustrate how wealth and power offer no immunity from suffering. As with most curses, the truth likely lies somewhere between legend and lifestyle.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT



BY JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN