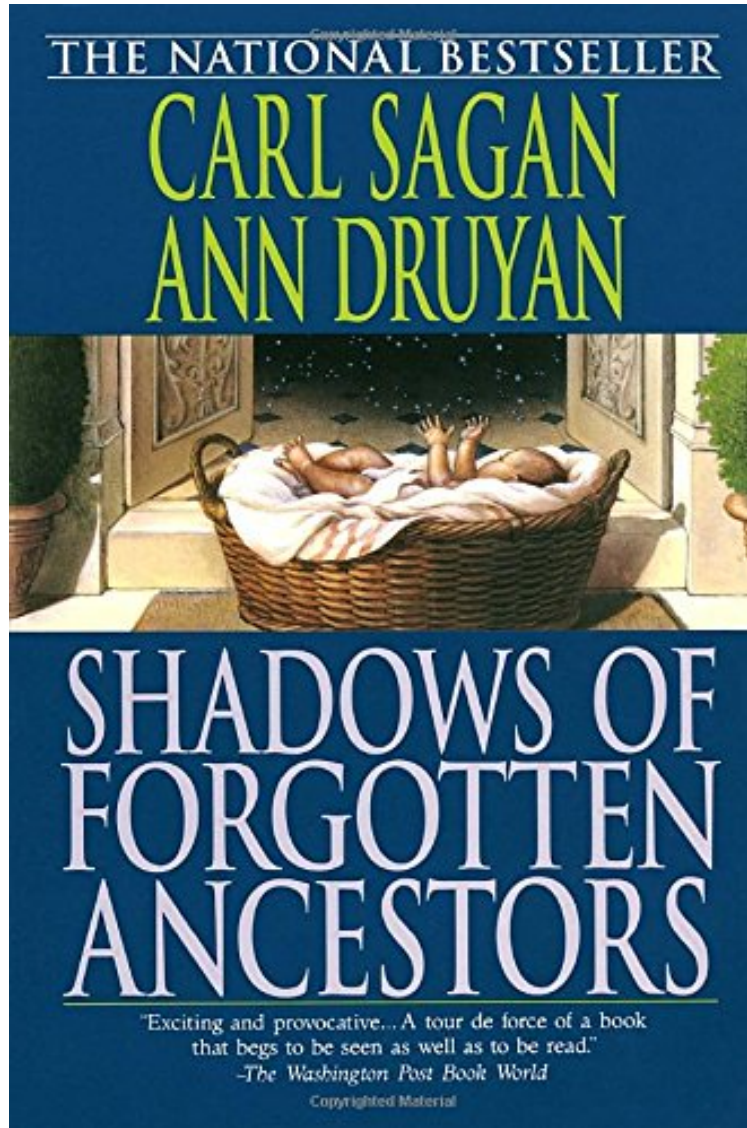


Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors

Carl Sagan, Ann Druyan

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Carl Sagan, Ann Druyan : Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors:

85 of 86 people found the following review helpful. Homo Sapiens in Perspective By Bradley P. Rich Let's begin with this: Carl Sagan was a master of popular science writing. Nobody wrote more compelling about science for the non-scientific reader. This book is a brief history of the universe as it relates to the development of mankind. It covers a lot of territory and the history of the universe is necessarily cursory. His introduction to genetics is basic, but very

readable for the non-scientist. This book really begins to "cook" when Sagan begins to discuss the behavioral and societal characteristics of our close relatives, the primates. Read it and draw your own conclusions, but I was astounded by the parallels between human society and the behavior of the other primate species. So much of our behavior, good and bad, is exhibited in primate socialization. I notice another reviewer somehow saw this as evidence of God's creation but I think that this strains the evidence that Sagan has carefully assembled. This is a book that will cause you to reassess what you believe being human means. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. are we greater? By Steven P. Harrison There are those people who think that there is nature and then there is us. Blind to the fact that we are a part of nature. Sagan makes it quite clear that this is the case, as he postulates the difference between our actions and those of our fellow creatures is of degree, not intent. He brings into view many examples of animals displaying characteristics we thought only we were capable of. Even though an avowed pragmatic scientist, Sagan looks at things with a philosopher's wisdom, sees and appreciates the mystery and interconnectedness of all things and doesn't deny the possibility of things outside our paradigm. Sagan and fellow thinker Adam Smith have both come to the conclusion that every species only perceives what needs to be perceived to survive and operate with our fellow mates, which begs the question what is beyond these varying levels of perception for we are not at the forefront. Many animals have greater perception capacities than us, we are not the paragon, just one of many, a highly successful one but perhaps not forever, it is just our turn. Sagan as always is provocative and introduces great points for thought. Think about what he proposes and you can no longer be comfortable among the mindless drones that sleepwalk through society thinking themselves superior. Steven Harrison 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book. By Steve Manion Very interesting book. Lots of information and explanations.

"Dazzling...A feast. Absorbing and elegantly written, it tells of the origins of life on earth, describes its variety and character, and culminates in a discussion of human nature and the complex traces of humankind's evolutionary past...It is an amazing story masterfully told." FINANCIAL TIMES (LONDON) World renowned scientist Carl Sagan and acclaimed author Ann Druyan have written a ROOTS for the human species, a lucid and riveting account of how humans got to be the way we are. It shows with humor and drama that many of our key traits--self-awareness, technology, family ties, submission to authority, hatred for those a little different from ourselves, reason, and ethics--are rooted in the deep past, and illuminated by our kinship with other animals. Astonishing in its scope, brilliant in its insights, and an absolutely compelling read, SHADOWS OF FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS is a triumph of popular science.

From Publishers Weekly In a leisurely, lyrical meditation on the roughly four-[billion]-year span since life dawned on Earth, Sagan and Druyan (Comet) argue that territoriality, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, occasional outbreeding and a preference for small, semi-isolated groups are elements in a survival strategy common to many species, including Homo sapiens. Yet society's problems, they assert, increasingly demand global solutions and require a dramatic, strategic shift which the authors optimistically believe humankind is capable of achieving. This engaging, humane odyssey offers a stunning refutation of the behavioristic worldview with its mechanistic notion that animals (except for humans) lack conscious awareness. Writing with awe and a command of their material, the husband-wife team cover well-trod terrain while they discuss the evolution of Earth's atmosphere and life forms, the genetic code, the advantages of sexual reproduction. The last third of the book, dealing with chimpanzees, baboons and apes, is the most interesting. Sagan and Druyan find chimps' social life "hauntingly familiar" with its hierarchy, combat, suppression of females and chimps' remarkable ability to communicate through symbols. First serial to Parade. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Astronomer Sagan is probably the biggest name in popular science writing, a fact that should assure that his latest book--written with his wife, Druyan--will find a wide audience. Sagan's goal is to explain how luck and natural selection combined to produce human beings after three and a half billion years of life on earth. Human behavior, he stresses, results more from similarities with our animal ancestors than from any unique qualities we may possess. Sagan flounders a bit early on in his effort to explain molecular evolution, but he picks up speed later when the focus shifts to primate behavior. Despite a preference for the overly dramatic phrase at the expense of scientific clarity, the argument is coherent throughout. While this is hardly one of the best books on human evolution, it will likely be very popular, especially in public libraries. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 6/1/92.-Eric Hinsdale, Trinity Univ. Lib., San Antonio Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Publisher Carl Sagan's reputation is truly awesome (in the old sense of the word), and his writing is terrific. He won the Pulitzer prize; he hosted the Peabody Emmy award-winning series Cosmos; and the book of the same title is the best-selling science book ever published in the English language. His wife, Ann Druyan, collaborated with him on many projects. Mr. Sagan made an immediate connection with a lot of people -- his books are written in such accessible language and with so much wit and intelligence that they have changed not only the way we look at science but also the way we look at life. This book especially touched many people's lives -- mine included. A. Krijgsman Associate Managing Editor