

Dawn of Man: THE STORY OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

Robin McKie

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Why did our earliest ancestors leave the trees and start to walk on two legs? What were the early people like? Did they have language? Were they predators or prey? Dawn of Man tells the remarkable epic of our 5million-year journey from ape to man. This extraordinary story has been pieced together form a myriad of fossil finds, prehistoric cave paintings, discarded stone tools, and traces of ancient genetic material. In this dramatic and highly readable account, Robin McKie, Science Editor of The Observer, unravels the saga of how these discoveries form a picture of our ancestors' lives. It is a gripping scientific detective story full of paleontologist-detectives whose intellect and foibles add to the adventure. The story arrives at a revelation of how our world became dominated by a single primate species: Homo sapiens. The clues to our past include astonishing human-like footprints, preserved in volcanic ash sediments for over 3.5 million years, made by a half-ape, half-man creature already walking on two legs; a startlingly well-preserved skeleton unearthed at Lake Turkana, Kenya, revealing the grim life-and-death story of an 11-year-old boy who lived on the African savannah 1.5 million years ago; and minute DNA samples which some scientists believe will help them trace back the lineage of Homo sapiens to one African woman who lived 200,000 years ago. Illustrated with evocative recreations of early man and his landscapes, photographs of the human fossils and of the paleontologists who discovered them, and maps of key fossil sites, this book- which accompanies The Learning Channel's fascinating new television series, Dawn of Man- unravels the clues, the setbacks, the human dramas, and the scientific disputes to tell the astonishing story of our ancestry.

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