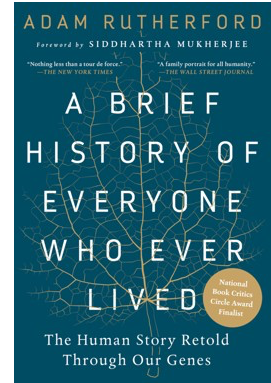


Discussion Guide

A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived: The Human Story Retold Through Our Genes By Adam Rutherford

1. Talk about some of the specific information DNA has turned up regarding "how our evolution has proceeded." Most especially, how has the new genetic learning upset the conventional wisdom about our human development?
2. *Follow-up to Question 1:* What is the story of the Neanderthals and our relationship with them? In terms of interbreeding, how does new knowledge contradict what has long been the accepted science? And the Denisovans: who were they?
3. How does Adam Rutherford response to the insistence that genetics is destiny? What is his view of the nature vs. nurture conundrum?
4. What light does DNA shed on race...and racism?
5. Rutherford delights in meanders and digressions, providing fascinating nuggets on subjects like earwax. What other stray topics does he light upon? How about the Vikings ...or the so-called "warrior gene"?
6. What role have genes played in eradicating or curing diseases? Were you surprised by Rutherford's answers?
7. Discuss the case of sickle cell, and the way in which evolution can give with one hand while taking away with the other.
8. How does the author feel about companies that offer genetic testing to reveal individuals' personal ancestry?
9. How does Rutherford defend against the naysayers when it comes to the cost and danger of continuing genetic research? What are the arguments made against further study — and what is the author's defense for its continuation? What is your opinion?
10. What struck you most about *A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived*? What surprised you most? Was your own understanding of human evolution challenged ... or affirmed?



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