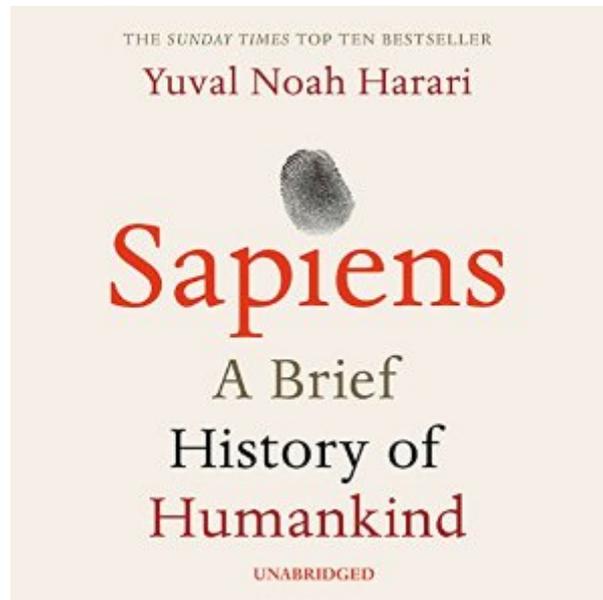


The book was found

Sapiens



Synopsis

The Sunday Times best seller. Earth is 4.5 billion years old. In just a fraction of that time, one species among countless others has conquered it. Us. We are the most advanced and most destructive animals ever to have lived. What makes us brilliant? What makes us deadly? What makes us sapiens? In this bold and provocative audiobook, Yuval Noah Harari explores who we are, how we got here, and where we're going. Sapiens is a thrilling account of humankind's extraordinary history from the Stone Age to the Silicon Age and our journey from insignificant apes to rulers of the world. For more, visit www.ynharari.com.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A standard history of the human race begins with Paleolithic proto-humans, traces the development of modern man or homo sapiens sapiens, then chronicles the beginnings and expansions of human civilization from agriculture to the present. Yuval Noah Harari's Sapiens follows that path, but with several intriguing twists. The result is a fascinating book which will challenge pre-conceptions and occasionally annoy or even anger the reader, but will always intrigue. Harari focusses on the three great revolutions of human history: Cognitive, Agricultural, and Scientific. He asks how "An Animal of No Significance" managed to become the dominant life form, and whether that animal's learning to produce his own food and then to further harness the natural world to his will through science were boons or setbacks, both for that animal and for the rest of the biosphere. In 20 brilliant chapters Harari asks his readers to consider not only what did happen, but what might have

occurred had things turned out slightly differently (the roles of chance and accident are given a lot of attention.) He reveals the mutually agreed upon "stories" that helped shape human societies and questions their validity, not to disillusion but to challenge his readers. At times the tone is unavoidably cynical, but at others there's a real optimistic air (leavened by some cautions here and there). I found Harari's ideas fascinating, especially those in his final chapter "The End of Homo Sapiens" and in his brief but important "Afterword: The Animal That Became a God." Readers who are looking for detailed chronicles listing, for example, the Emperors of China, Kings and Queens of England, or Presidents of the United States should look elsewhere.

This book is a masterpiece. I feel fortunate that I discovered it before most other people. I discovered it by reading an extremely negative review for this book in the Wall Street Journal written by a historian. (In his defense, he just didn't understand that this is not a history book, and he had no idea what Harari is getting at). This book never stops in challenging my understanding of our place in the universe. What we believe in determines what we want to want. Sapiens are distinguished by our ability to believe in fictions. The cognitive revolutions starts with the first set of hypothetical stories we allow ourselves to believe in whether they are true or not. The real importance is that the family, kin, friends, and community share those beliefs. Our fictions allow us to cooperate. They give us the imaginary order that is necessary for societies to act together. Corporations are not people, they do not exist in reality. One can not point to a corporation. It's not the buildings, or the executives or any other physical entities that make the corporation, but it is our belief that makes them real. The author notes that the word for corporation comes from the Latin, corpus, the same as in the body (corpus) of Christ within the transubstantiation. Religion gives us comfort from the absurd and comforts us to accept death. Science (and its offshoot, technology) does the opposite. It gives us knowledge leading to life extension and makes our time alive more comfortable. The Gilgamesh Project of life extension is a major character in this book. The myths we create can never be logically consistent without contradictions. Perfect liberty will always conflict with perfect equality.

I'd like to give this book 3 1/2 stars if I could. It is engaging and easy to read, but somewhat flighty and full of broad statements that make it hard to differentiate facts from the author's opinion. It's also somewhat contradictory. Some examples:- Dr. Harari states that the agricultural revolution was a fraud, and that Sapiens (presumably both us and Neanderthals) would have been better off if we had remained hunter-gatherers. He envisions an idyllic life for hunter societies and

compares that unfavorably to the dreary life of Sapiens down on the farm. However, a few pages later he points out that the extinction of mega fauna immediately followed Sapiens appearance on major continents such as Australia and North America. So hunter-gathers were, at best, living an unsustainable lifestyle and one which, as soon as the mammoths and sloths were all eaten, would lead to starvation. Unless of course, those starving hunters discovered that some grasses were good to eat and that they could grow them on farms!- He equates the Code of Hammurabi to the Declaration of Independence. But the more correct modern-day equivalent for King Hammurabi's code (in the U.S. at least) is the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) as both documents lay out crimes and punishments. The Declaration of Independence is a statement of principles, or mythos (not myth) within which our founding fathers laid out the basis for separation from Britain.- He deconstructs that same Declaration, declaring that there is no biological basis for concepts like "inalienable rights", "liberty", "created equal" and "pursuit of happiness." But then a few pages later, he uses those concepts to decry the fate of domesticated animals because they are confined and are bred for human consumption. How is Dr.

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