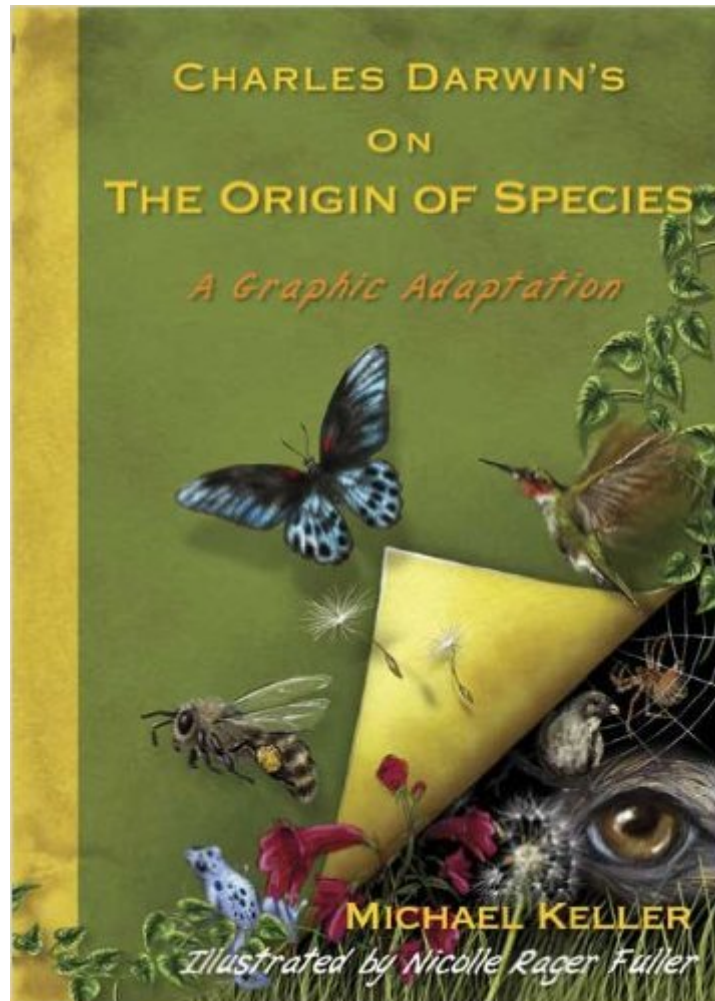


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Charles Darwin's On The Origin Of Species: A Graphic Adaptation



Synopsis

A stunning graphic adaptation of one of the most famous, contested, and important books of all time. Few books have been as controversial or as historically significant as Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. Since the moment it was released on November 24, 1859, Darwin's masterwork has been heralded for changing the course of science and condemned for its implied challenges to religion. In *Charles Darwin's On the Origin of Species*, author Michael Keller and illustrator Nicolle Rager Fuller introduce a new generation of readers to the original text. Including sections about his pioneering research, the book's initial public reception, his correspondence with other leading scientists, as well as the most recent breakthroughs in evolutionary theory, this riveting, beautifully rendered adaptation breathes new life into Darwin's seminal and still polarizing work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The idea of a graphic version of the "Origin of Species" is a good one, as many casual readers will never get through the original. Thus a graphic format might be more easily read and understood by them, if presented in the right way. Years ago I found the book "Darwin for Beginners" by Jonathan Miller and Borin Van Loon to be a rather charming graphic account of Darwin's ideas. Now Rodale Press has recently published Michael Keller's "Charles Darwin's On The Origin of Species: A Graphic Adaptation" and I was interested in seeing how the subject was treated compared to the earlier work. At first I did not particularly like the illustrations (as noted by another reviewer), but

styles differ and I while I don't think the illustrations are up to more rigorous scientific standards, they are more than adequate for a book of this nature. Boren Van Loon's illustrations, which borrowed a lot from other classic ink drawings and paintings, were also a bit quirky. However the main point is that the Theory of Natural Selection was well covered and I think pretty well explained. I do have a few gripes (the reason that I did not give this book five stars) and these primarily have to do with content. For some reason Keller apparently used later editions of "The Origin" in which Spencer's phrase "Survival of the Fittest" was added. Darwin did not invent this phrase and it was not in the first edition. The phrase, while true in the sense that "fit" can mean any adaptation that works to allow an individual to reproduce, does not necessarily mean that the "strong" overcome the "weak" and has unfortunately been utilized to imply that there are "inferior" peoples because they do not fit preconceived notions of superiority.

In less than two hundred pages of annotated color illustrations, this book attempts to cover Charles Darwin's large and complex volume. Obviously, the author has massively edited Darwin's original material. However, it is well done. The book uses Darwin's words more often than not. The selection and presentation makes it cogent to our time. The author often draws examples from recent experience. This makes the material more understandable and interesting to today's readers. The book targets young adults and the author has done everything possible to attract and hold such a reader. Whether it will be successful with any particular individual is unpredictable; it is a tough audience. The illustrator, Nicolle Rager Fuller, deserves equal billing to the author. Her work is obviously an essential part of the book. Further, the artwork is perfect for this book and the target audience. If anything in this book will capture young readers, it is the art. Adult readers will find it pleasing as well. The nineteenth century is crowded with great scientists, scientific advances, and achievements having impacts into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. To a great extent, those scientists communicated and fed off one another. The fields of biology, geology, archeology, philosophy, horticulture, anthropology, mathematics, sociology, ornithology, entomology, botany, and zoology were all advancing and reinforcing one another. This book brings out this fact and cites the names of scientists and practitioners with whom Darwin interacted. The book is balanced, honest, and accurate. Unfortunately, anything dealing with Darwin is politically charged.

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