



Monkeyluv: And Other Essays on Our Lives as Animals

By Robert M. Sapolsky

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How do imperceptibly small differences in the environment change one's behavior? What is the anatomy of a bad mood? Does stress shrink our brains? What does *People* magazine's list of America's "50 Most Beautiful People" teach us about nature and nurture? What makes one organism sexy to another? What makes one orgasm different from another? Who will be the winner in the genetic war between the sexes?

Welcome to *Monkeyluv*, a curious and entertaining collection of essays about the human animal in all its fascinating variety, from Robert M. Sapolsky, America's most beloved neurobiologist/primatologist. Organized into three sections, each tackling a Big Question in natural science, *Monkeyluv* offers a lively exploration of the influence of genes and the environment on behavior; the social and political -- and, of course, sexual -- implications of behavioral biology; and society's shaping of the individual. From the mating rituals of prairie dogs to the practice of religion in the rain forest, the secretion of pheromones to bugs in the brain, Sapolsky brilliantly synthesizes cutting-edge scientific research with wry, erudite observations about the enormous complexity of simply being human. Thoughtful, engaging, and infused with pop-cultural insights, this collection will appeal to the inner monkey in all of us.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. There are many things one might expect to find within the covers of a collection of essays by a Stanford professor of biology and neurology: a rich understanding of the complexities of human and animal life; a sensitivity to the relationship between our biological nature and our environmental context; a humility in the face of still-to-be-understood facets of the human condition. All these are in Sapolsky's new collection, along with something one might not expect: wry, witty prose that reads like the unexpected love child of a merger between *Popular Science* and *GQ*, written by an author who could be as much at home holding court at the local pub as he is in a university lab. In this collection (the majority of pieces ran in *Discover*, others in *Men's Health*, the *New Yorker* and *Scientific American*), Sapolsky ranges wherever his formidable curiosity leads, from genetic determinism as seen through the eyes of *People* magazine's "50 Most Beautiful People" to the reasons why crotchety old people are neurologically disinclined to like whatever passes for music among young people nowadays. Each essay brings its own unexpected delight, brief enough that you can dip a toe in, yet insightful enough to encourage you to pursue the topic further (and Sapolsky helpfully appends to each essay a list of suggested further readings). (Sept.)

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Review

"A combination of Oliver Sacks and David Foster Wallace. . . . Sapolsky is that professor whose classes were impossible to get into, the courses where the students had an infuriatingly good time while they were learning, the ones where the students were inspired to become scientists." (*Los Angeles Times*)

"A hit. . . . Sapolsky lets his obsessive curiosity wander amiably . . . Chases after answers to such puzzles with jovial abandon." (*New York Times Book Review*)

"The prose is perfectly pitched: Sapolsky writes in a jocular, entertaining style without ever pandering to the presumed ignorance of his readers." (*The Guardian (London)*)

"Sapolsky ranges wherever his formidable curiosity leads . . . Each essay brings its own unexpected delight . . ." (*Publisher's Weekly (starred review)*)

About the Author

Robert M. Sapolsky is the author of several works of nonfiction, including *A Primate's Memoir*, *The Trouble with Testosterone*, and *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*. He is a professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University and the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation genius grant. He lives in San Francisco.

Users Review

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Katrina Roberts:

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