



## Life Ascending: The Ten Great Inventions of Evolution

By Nick Lane

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**Life Ascending: The Ten Great Inventions of Evolution** By Nick Lane

**“Original and awe-inspiring . . . an exhilarating tour of some of the most profound and important ideas in biology.”?New Scientist**

Where does DNA come from? What is consciousness? How did the eye evolve? Drawing on a treasure trove of new scientific knowledge, Nick Lane expertly reconstructs evolution’s history by describing its ten greatest inventions?from sex and warmth to death?resulting in a stunning account of nature’s ingenuity. 20 figures

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**Life Ascending: The Ten Great Inventions of Evolution** By Nick Lane **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this wonderful book, Lane (*Power, Sex, Suicide*), a biochemist at University College London, asks an intriguing and simple question: what were the great biological inventions that led to Earth as we know it. (He is quick to point out that by *invention*, he refers to nature's own creativity, not to intelligent design.) Lane argues that there are 10 such inventions and explores the evolution of each. Not surprisingly, each of the 10—the origin of life, the creation of DNA, photosynthesis, the evolution of complex cells, sex, movement, sight, warm bloodedness, consciousness and death—is intricate, its origins swirling in significant controversy. Drawing on cutting-edge science, Lane does a masterful job of explaining the science of each, distinguishing what is fairly conclusively known and what is currently reasonable conjecture. At times he presents some shocking but compelling information. For example, one of the light-sensitive pigments in human eyes probably arose first in algae, where it can still be found today helping to maximize photosynthesis. While each of Lane's 10 subjects deserves a book of its own, they come together to form an elegant, fully satisfying whole. 20 illus. (June)

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#### Review

“The emergence of life itself remains obscure. But as Lane shows with clarity and vigor, fascinating studies on the subject abound.” (The New York Times)

“Excellent and imaginative and, similar to life itself, the book is full of surprises.” (Nature)

“Lane lays out processes of dizzying complexity in smooth, nimble prose.” (Kirkus Reviews)

“If Charles Darwin sprang from his grave, I would give him this fine book to bring him up to speed.” (Matt Ridley, author of *The Red Queen*)

#### About the Author

Nick Lane is a biochemist in the Department of Genetics, Evolution and Environment at University College London, and leads the UCL Origins of Life Program. He was awarded the 2015 Biochemical Society Award for his outstanding contribution to the molecular life sciences. He is the author of *Life Ascending: The Ten Great Inventions of Evolution*, which won the 2010 Royal Society Prize for Science Books, as well as *Power, Sex, Suicide: Mitochondria and the Meaning of Life* and *Oxygen: The Molecule that Made the World*.

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