

THE  
RELUCTANT  
MR. DARWIN

*An Intimate Portrait  
of Charles Darwin  
and the Making of His  
Theory of Evolution*

by David Quammen



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### *Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion*



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Darwin is deservedly given credit for the theory of evolution. He accumulated evidence demonstrating that organisms evolve over eons of time and diversify as they adapt to environments that are enormously diverse. Most important, however, is that he discovered natural selection, the process that accounts for the evolution of organisms and for their adaptive features; that is, their "design." The design of organisms is not intelligent, as it would be expected from an engineer, but imperfect and worse: defects, dysfunctions, oddities, waste, and cruelty pervade the living world.

Darwin's theory of evolution accounts for the design and diversity of organisms as the result of the gradual accumulation of spontaneous mutations sorted out by natural selection. Darwin's theory is a gift to religion, because the imperfections and cruelties of the living world need not be attributed to the Creator's design, but to natural processes, just like earthquakes or volcanic eruptions.

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