



Lucy's Legacy: The Quest for Human Origins

Dr Donald Johanson, Kate Wong

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“Lucy is a 3.2-million-year-old skeleton who has become the spokeswoman for human evolution. She is perhaps the best known and most studied fossil hominid of the twentieth century, the benchmark by which other discoveries of human ancestors are judged.”—From *Lucy's Legacy*

In his *New York Times* bestseller, *Lucy: The Beginnings of Humankind*, renowned paleoanthropologist Donald Johanson told the incredible story of his discovery of a partial female skeleton that revolutionized the study of human origins. Lucy literally changed our understanding of our world and who we come from. Since that dramatic find in 1974, there has been heated debate and—most important—more groundbreaking discoveries that have further transformed our understanding of when and how humans evolved.

In *Lucy's Legacy*, Johanson takes readers on a fascinating tour of the last three decades of study—the most exciting period of paleoanthropologic investigation thus far. In that time, Johanson and his colleagues have uncovered a total of 363 specimens of *Australopithecus afarensis* (Lucy's species, a transitional creature between apes and humans), spanning 400,000 years. As a result, we now have a unique fossil record of one branch of our family tree—that family being humanity—a tree that is believed to date back a staggering 7 million years.

Focusing on dramatic new fossil finds and breakthrough advances in DNA research, Johanson provides the latest answers that post-Lucy paleoanthropologists are finding to questions such as: How did *Homo sapiens* evolve? When and where did our species originate? What separates hominids from the apes? What was the nature of Neandertal and modern human encounters? What mysteries about human evolution remain to be solved?

Donald Johanson is a passionate guide on an extraordinary journey from the ancient landscape of Hadar, Ethiopia—where Lucy was unearthed and where many other exciting fossil discoveries have since been made—to a seaside cave in South Africa that once sheltered early members of our own species, and many other significant sites. Thirty-five years after Lucy, Johanson continues to enthusiastically probe the origins of our species and what it means to be human.

From the Hardcover edition.

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