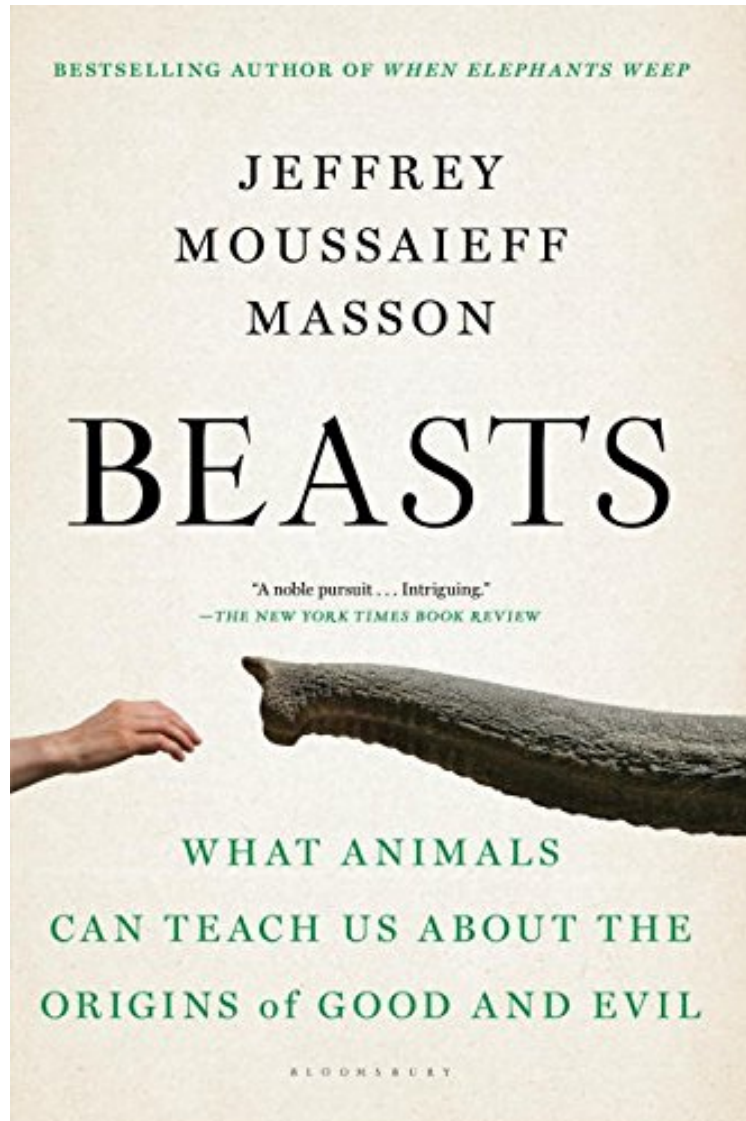


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Beasts: What Animals Can Teach Us About the Origins of Good and Evil

Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson
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Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson : Beasts: What Animals Can Teach Us About the Origins of Good and Evil before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beasts: What Animals Can Teach Us About the Origins of Good and Evil:

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In his previous bestsellers, Masson has showed us that animals can teach us much about our own emotions--love (dogs), contentment (cats), and grief (elephants), among others. In *Beasts*, he demonstrates that the violence we perceive in the "wild" is a matter of projection. Animals predators kill to survive, but animal aggression is not even remotely equivalent to the violence of mankind. Humans are the most violent animals to our own kind in existence. We lack what all other animals have: a check on the aggression that would destroy the species rather than serve it. In *Beasts*, Masson brings to life the richness of the animal world and strips away our misconceptions of the creatures we fear, offering a powerful and compelling look at our uniquely human propensity toward aggression.

From BooklistMasson (*Dogs Make Us Human*, 2011) has written extensively about emotions in animals and what studying animals can teach us about being human. Here he examines the negative emotion, anger, and its manifestation as aggression. Humans often refer to each other as animals, meaning that the other person's behavior is dangerous or cruel, but how true is this characterization? Masson argues that the comparison is not at all apt, that we display much more violence and cruelty against our own species than any other animal on the planet, and that we can actually learn to change by observing the purported beasts that share our world. Examining such human endeavors as war, exploitation, and hatred, Masson delineates the differences between humans and other animals and points out that we are the only species that ever shows these behaviors. Even the supposedly positive human traits of kindness and altruism, which we like to think separate us from the beasts, have been frequently demonstrated in other species. Heavily footnoted and with an extensive bibliography, this one will make you think about the definition of human. -- Nancy Bent "Most of us see humans as morally superior to animals in every respect, while describing our uniquely human bad behavior (war, torture, enslavement, extermination) as "brutish, animalistic, inhuman, sub-human"--as if it reflected "animal" origins. But Jeffrey Masson has made me aware that humans in fact are the only animals that exhibit this behavior, and do so frequently and massively. A groundbreaking book." --Daniel Ellsberg "Masson reveals how we shortchange ourselves with our narrow view of community, by laying down an almost impassable and rocky road between ourselves and 'others.' "Beasts" reminds us of the unforgivable things humans do to dominate animals." -- Ingrid Newkirk, founder of PETA ""Beasts" is a tour de force that takes us on a journey of human nature, from the organized violence of war, to our individual cruelty toward solitary humans and animals, to the love, compassion, and altruism that we can show toward one another. After reading this book, you will never view human nature the same." -- Con Slobodchikoff, author of "Chasing Doctor Dolittle" ""Beasts" is profoundly wise, deeply compassionate, and filled with insights and understanding that can reshape the way we think about ourselves and our relationship to life itself. Inspiring and a joy to read." --John Robbins, author of "Diet for a New America" "Jeffrey Masson is a forward-thinking writer who's not afraid to take on some of the most entrenched ideas and revered thinkers of our age. A provocative book!" --Jonathan Balcombe, author of *Pleasurable Kingdom* "A gentle, thoughtful and remarkably wide-ranging book that explores the nature of humanity and the nature of violence and hatred, suggesting paths we humans might take to turn toward peace and kindness. "Beasts" deserves to be widely read and widely pondered." --Pat Shipman, author of *The Animal Connection* "A noble pursuit . . . intriguing." --"New York Times Book Review" ""This one will make you think about the definition of human." --"Booklist" "Masson's writing is easily accessible to both a general audience and those already familiar with the subject. With a personal, passionate, and sympathetic style, Masson makes an imperative case . . . "Beasts" implores us to rethink our long-entrenched beliefs regarding the nature of non-human animals, in hopes that by more accurately perceiving the world around us, we may learn to treat not only other species with greater kindness and compassion, but perhaps our own as well." --"The Oregonian"" ""A compelling, unsettling, provocative examination of the relation of beast to man." --"Kirkus Reviews" "Most of us see humans as morally superior to animals in every respect, while describing our uniquely human bad behavior (war, torture, enslavement, extermination) as "brutish, animalistic, inhuman, sub-human"--as if it reflected "animal" origins. But Jeffrey Masson has made me aware that humans in fact are the only animals that exhibit this behavior, and do so frequently and massively. A groundbreaking book. "Daniel Ellsberg" Masson reveals how we shortchange ourselves with our narrow view of community, by laying down an almost impassable and rocky road between ourselves and others.' "Beasts" reminds us of the unforgivable things humans do to dominate animals. "Ingrid Newkirk, founder of PETA" "Beasts" is a tour de force that takes us on a journey of human nature, from the organized violence of war, to our individual cruelty toward solitary humans and animals, to the love, compassion, and altruism that we can show toward one another. After reading this book, you will never view human nature the same. "Con Slobodchikoff, author of *Chasing Doctor Dolittle*" "Beasts" is profoundly wise, deeply compassionate, and filled with insights and

understanding that can reshape the way we think about ourselves and our relationship to life itself. Inspiring and a joy to read. "John Robbins, author of Diet for a New America" Jeffrey Masson is a forward-thinking writer who's not afraid to take on some of the most entrenched ideas and revered thinkers of our age. A provocative book! "Jonathan Balcombe, author of Pleasurable Kingdom" A gentle, thoughtful and remarkably wide-ranging book that explores the nature of humanity and the nature of violence and hatred, suggesting paths we humans might take to turn toward peace and kindness. "Beasts" deserves to be widely read and widely pondered. "Pat Shipman, author of The Animal Connection" A noble pursuit . . . intriguing. "New York Times Book " This one will make you think about the definition of human. "Booklist" Masson's writing is easily accessible to both a general audience and those already familiar with the subject. With a personal, passionate, and sympathetic style, Masson makes an imperative case "Beasts" implores us to rethink our long-entrenched beliefs regarding the nature of non-human animals, in hopes that by more accurately perceiving the world around us, we may learn to treat not only other species with greater kindness and compassion, but perhaps our own as well. "The Oregonian" A compelling, unsettling, provocative examination of the relation of beast to man. "Kirkus s""About the Author Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, an ex-psychoanalyst and former director of the Freud Archives, is the author of numerous bestselling books on animal emotions, including Dogs Never Lie About Love and When Elephants Weep. He lives in Australia and Europe with his family. Visit his website at www.jeffreymasson.com.