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Sinopsis

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In the heated landscape of public discourse about evolution, books are weapons, lobbed by each side at the other. While creationists tend to directly attack the credibility of evolution, scientists have generally been loath to engage in direct comparison of evolutionary and creationist theories, preferring instead to simply focus on laying out the facts of evolution. Evolutionary biologist Mindell's contribution to the fray breaks little new ground. Couched as a general and accessible overview of how evolutionary reasoning pervades our lives, from the selective breeding of animals to understanding disease-causing pathogens, this book does have a few daggers tucked into its belt; the book opens with an examination of three "unpopular discoveries" (heliocentrism, the germ theory of disease and evolution) and ends with a coda that cursorily nods toward tolerance of religious and moral qualms but has little patience for them. What lies between is a perfectly reasonable survey of the ways that evolution explains biology, medicine, culture and religion. Written for a general audience, the book is solid but unremarkable, another salvo in the roar of the larger cultural war.