

BOOK SUMMARY

Guns, Germs, and Steel

by Jared Diamond

Why did some societies conquer the world while others were conquered? Not because of the people, but because of the land they started with.

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Key ideas

1. **Farmer power.** Food production created surpluses, bigger populations and full-time specialists, the root of every later advantage.
2. **The Anna Karenina principle.** A wild animal must pass every test to be domesticated, which is why only 14 big mammals ever were.
3. **The lethal gift of livestock.** Crowd diseases evolved from farm animals and killed far more Native Americans than swords did.
4. **Tilted axes.** Crops and inventions spread easily east to west across Eurasia, but slowly north to south in the Americas and Africa.
5. **Invention is the mother of necessity.** Most technologies are invented first and find their uses later, and they spread fastest among large, connected populations.



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