



Rat: How the World's Most Notorious Rodent Clawed Its Way to the Top

Jerry Langton

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From its origins in the swamps of Southeast Asia to its role in the medieval Black Death to its unshakeable niche in modern urban centers, the rat has incredible evolutionary advantages. Combining biology with history, and social commentary with firsthand experience, *Rat* dispels the myths and exposes the little-known facts about the ubiquitous rodent.

Plague carrier, city vermin, and an out-and-out menace to modern man, the rat, like death and taxes, is a certain fixture in humankind's history. Rats are found in virtually every nook and cranny of the globe and their numbers are ever increasing. Rats are always adapting and they seem to outwit any attempts by humans to wipe them out. What makes the rat such a worthy adversary and how has it risen to the top of the animal kingdom?

- Rats have been discovered living in meat lockers. The rats in there simply grew longer hair, fatter bodies, and nested in the carcasses they fed upon.
- A female rat can, under good conditions, have well over 100,000 babies in her lifetime.
- A rat can fall fifty feet onto pavement and skitter away unharmed.
- A rat's jaws can exert a force more than twenty times as powerful as a human's.
- The front side of a rat's incisors are as hard as some grades of steel.

In *Rat: How the World's Most Notorious Rodent Clawed Its Way to the Top*, Jerry Langton explores the history, myth, physiology, habits, and psyche of the rat and even speculates on the future of the rat and how they might evolve over the next few hundred years.

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