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A History of Great Inventions

James Dyson

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A History of Great Inventions

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A History of Great Inventions James Dyson
Lucidly written and generously illustrated in color, this volume of scientific history by award-winning inventor James Dyson details the greatest achievements of the human imagination since early hominids invented stone tools about 250,000 years ago. Through thousands of years and vital inventions more--the canoe, the wheel, ink and papyrus, language, maps, currency, law--the primitive hunter-gatherer of the Stone Age would evolve into the literate citizen of ancient Rome at the time of Christ, as the opening chapter of this fascinating chronicle shows. Succeeding chapters follow human technological advances up to the seventeenth century and then in the age of industrial power, the age of electricity, the atomic age, and the postwar world of the microchip and the genome. Not only does Dyson survey the history of human inventions, he also explores the circumstances and impulses that underlie them. While necessity often proves to be the mother of invention, frustration and serendipity, too, can prod genius. Frustration over the countless ships and lives lost at sea led to John Harrison's invention of extraordinarily accurate clocks, whereas the cocklebur seeds that by chance stuck to George de Mestral's jacket resulted in his invention of Velcro. If, however, all invention originates in a knowledge of what already exists, as Dyson submits, his volume beautifully and accessibly illuminates the many diverse and interconnected worlds in which invention has evolved and thrived.

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