



# **In the Beginning Was the Worm: Finding the Secrets of Life in a Tiny Hermaphrodite**

*Andrew Brown*

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# In the Beginning Was the Worm: Finding the Secrets of Life in a Tiny Hermaphrodite

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**In the Beginning Was the Worm: Finding the Secrets of Life in a Tiny Hermaphrodite** Andrew Brown  
This book is an account of the first great triumph of genomics: the thirty-year struggle to decode the complete DNA of a nematode worm. Success in this was what made the human genome project possible. **IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORM** is an exciting but scrupulous account of a genuine scientific triumph, which will delight both those who know the subject and those who don't. **IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORM** tells of some remarkable characters who have changed our approach to science irrevocably, among them Sydney Brenner, a heroic dreamer who first thought of understanding an animal as a sort of biological Meccano; John Sulston, his first post-doctoral student, who managed to raise GBP30 million; his friend, Bob Horvitz, who has, to all intents and purposes, spent more than thirty years studying the 22 cells of a worm's vulva; and Fred Sanger, the only man to have won two Nobel Prizes in the same discipline. Decades of painstaking research triumphed in 1998, when this worm was the first creature to have all its DNA mapped -- but now what? We still don't know how to build a single worm. In this intriguing story of dreams and disillusionment, Andrew Brown contemplates the next fifty years of biological science, and the way that ignorance expands to surround all available knowledge.

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