

The \$1,000 Genome: The Revolution in DNA Sequencing and the New Era of Personalized Medicine

Author: Kevin Davies
Simon and Schuster (2010)
352 pp., \$26.00 hardback.

Kevin Davies, the (co-)author of *Cracking the Genome* and *Breakthrough*, brings his popularization of modern genetics to the newly emerging field of personal genomics and next-generation DNA sequencing (NGS) in his most recent book, *The \$1000 Genome: The Revolution in DNA Sequencing and the New Era of Personalized Medicine*. Davies's newest work recounts the post-Human Genome Project (HGP) quest for the ever less expensive human genome sequence and its reciprocal pursuit of the meaning of variation among human genomes for traits, particularly common disease. Weaving these two disparate threads together throughout the book, Davies provides a chronologically anchored story of the development of next-generation DNA sequencing technology, from Life/454 and Illumina to Pacific Biosciences, personalized genomics from Watson and Venter to the Public Genome Project, and whole-genome association studies linking SNPs to common human diseases.

Although the broad range of topics ensures that each chapter introduces an interesting big idea, technology, or social issue, the narrative flow can be jarring as Davies jumps around among NGS technologies, personal genomics companies, and medical genetics research. The book relies perhaps too heavily on colorful stories of the companies, projects, and people pursuing the \$1,000 genome, especially given the limited discussions and analyses of the science and technology itself. Nevertheless, *The \$1,000 Genome* does a good job presenting the complex and interconnected technologies and science underlying the genomics revolution as vignettes accessible to an informed but nonexpert audience. After a childhood of reading popular science books about physics, *The \$1,000 Genome* delivers exactly what I have come to expect of such books: an enjoyable, easy read that makes one wish they were part of the exciting story itself, which for me is a fact that I'm thankful for even more after reading Davies's book.

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