



The Stag Hunt and the Evolution of Social Structure

Brian Skyrms

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Brian Skyrms' study of ideas of cooperation and collective action explores the implications of a prototypical story found in Rousseau's *A Discourse on Inequality*. It is therein that Rousseau contrasts the pay-off of hunting hare (where the risk of non-cooperation is small and the reward equally small) against the pay-off of hunting the stag (where maximum cooperation is required but the reward is much greater.) Thus, rational agents are pulled in one direction by considerations of risk and in another by considerations of mutual benefit. Written with Skyrms' characteristic clarity and verve, *The Stage Hunt* will be eagerly sought by readers who enjoyed his earlier work *Evolution of the Social Contract*. Brian Skyrms, distinguished Professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science and Economics at the University of California at Irvine and director of its interdisciplinary program in history and philosophy of science, has published widely in the areas of inductive logic, decision theory, rational deliberation and causality. Seminal works include *Evolution of the Social Contract* (Cambridge, 1996), *The Dynamics of Rational Deliberation* (Harvard, 1990), *Pragmatics and Empiricism* (Yale, 1984), and *Causal Necessity* (Yale, 1980).

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