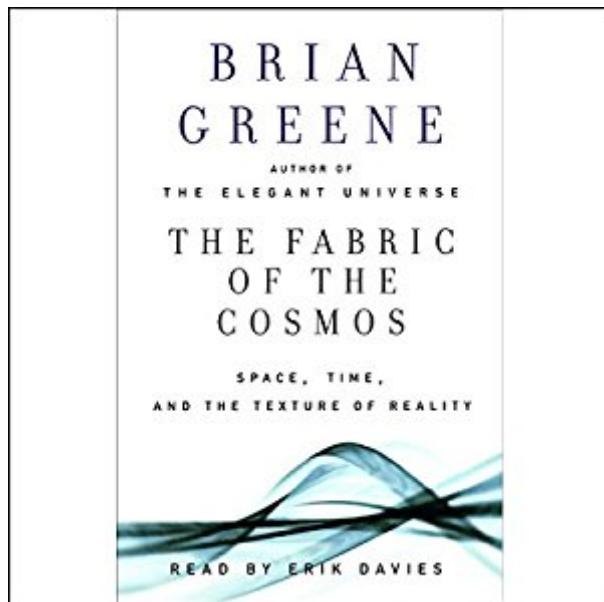


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The Fabric Of The Cosmos: Space, Time, And The Texture Of Reality



Synopsis

From Brian Greene, one of the world's leading physicists, comes a grand tour of the universe that makes us look at reality in a completely different way. Space and time form the very fabric of the cosmos. Yet they remain among the most mysterious of concepts. Is space an entity? Why does time have a direction? Could the universe exist without space and time? Can we travel to the past? Greene uses these questions to guide us toward modern science's new and deeper understanding of the universe. From Newton's unchanging realm in which space and time are absolute, to Einstein's fluid conception of spacetime, to quantum mechanics' entangled arena where vastly distant objects can bridge their spatial separation to instantaneously coordinate their behavior or even undergo teleportation, Greene reveals our world to be very different from what common experience leads us to believe. Focusing on the enigma of time, Greene establishes that nothing in the laws of physics insists that it run in any particular direction and that time's arrow is a relic of the universe's condition at the moment of the big bang. And in explaining the big bang itself, Greene shows how recent cutting-edge developments in superstring and M-theory may reconcile the behavior of everything from the smallest particle to the largest black hole. This startling vision culminates in a vibrant eleven-dimensional multiverse, pulsating with ever-changing textures, where space and time themselves may dissolve into subtler, more fundamental entities. Sparked by the trademark wit, humor, and brilliant use of analogy that have made *The Elegant Universe* a modern classic, Brian Greene takes us all, regardless of our scientific backgrounds, on an irresistible and revelatory journey to the new layers of reality that modern physics has discovered lying just beneath the surface of our everyday world. With 146 illustrations

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Customer Reviews

I happened by chance on The Elegant Universe two years ago during one of my "learn the newest" in physics stretches. I'd read many popularizations to that point, but none could hold a candle to The Elegant Universe. The chapters on relativity and quantum mechanics were, arguably, the clearest treatment of these subjects ever written, and that really says something since this subject has been written about endlessly. I knew little about string theory at the time but found Greene's encapsulation of the theory to be among the best popular science writing I've read. So I was so happy when I saw he had a new book out. Having now finished it, I am even happier. It is a phenomenal successor to The Elegant Universe; in some ways I liked it even better. Greene's crystal clear and never a dull moment prose are out in force, with his uncanny ability to anticipate the questions the reader (or at least this reader) will have regarding material one page, and answer them on the next. There were so many times I asked myself "what about this"? only to find it answered a paragraph later. The material is also carefully arranged so that you can read it along three different strands, corresponding to different levels of background/interest. In the first strand, you can read the book, skipping the sections which Greene has indicated to be more difficult. In the second strand, you can read all sections, as I did, gaining an even greater appreciation of the ideas and related tricky points. In the third strand you can also read the endnotes which contain very detailed versions of the material covered in the main book, sometimes making use of equations. What I especially liked about The Fabric of the Cosmos, was the choice of subjects.

As someone who has taught high school and college level physics for close to 30 years, I can say with some degree of experience that this is, hands down, the clearest, most informative, and most exciting book on physics I've ever had the pleasure to encounter. About 5 years ago I would have given almost as high accolades to Green's first book, Elegant Universe. Now, however, Fabric of the Cosmos, in my opinion, has jumped ahead. Fabric of the Cosmos is very far from being a simplified version of The Elegant Universe, as someone in this bulletin board has said. Instead, Fabric of the Cosmos is so disarmingly clear and so cleverly crafted in its use of analogy and argument, that it does indeed present an easier read than The Elegant Universe. But the material covered in Fabric of the Cosmos is very different from Elegant, and most notably, the text dives head first into some of

the trickiest, most absorbing, and far-reaching issues that physicists have struggled with for a very long time. Many of these difficult questions--is space real? what is the nature of quantum entanglement? why does time seem to go in a fixed direction? what happened at the very moment of creation? can string theory be tested? -- are avoided by mainstream physicists and too difficult to be taken on by most science journalists in anything but a superficial treatment. The highly crafted writing in this book, however, cuts through the forest of complexity with such ease, that the reader who is not already well versed in physics, does not realize the gift he or she is given by a presentation that is clearer than I would have ever thought possible.

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