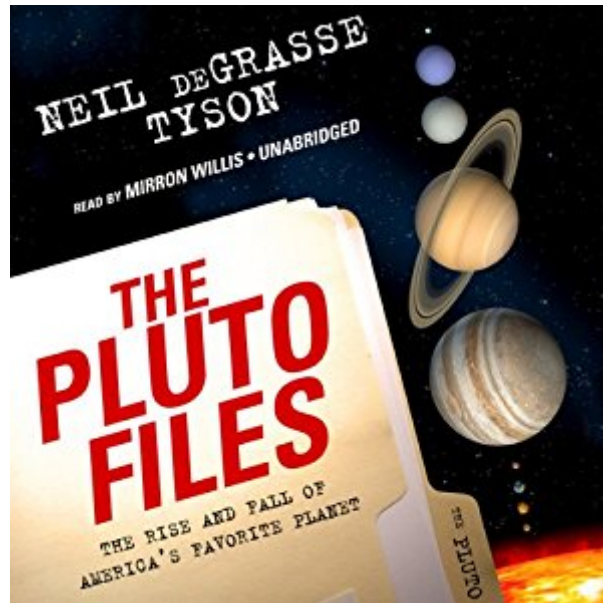


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The Pluto Files: The Rise And Fall Of America's Favorite Planet



Synopsis

When the International Astronomical Union voted Pluto out of planethood, Americans rallied behind this extraterrestrial underdog. Pluto is entrenched in our cultural, patriotic view of the cosmos, and Tyson is on a quest to discover why. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Customer Reviews

Neil deGrasse Tyson is one of the world's most famous scientists. He is an astrophysicist and a columnist for *Natural History*. In addition to his own research and technical writings, he has written popularizations like *Death by Black Hole*, and he has produced television documentaries on the cosmos. It was as director at the Hayden Planetarium that he inadvertently stepped into one of the biggest scientific controversies of recent years. It had nothing to do with religious antagonism against evolution or a universe more than 6,000 years old. It had nothing to do with global warming. What got the public up in arms against him was a celestial body smaller than Earth's Moon, an icy object five billion miles from the Sun that no one knew for sure existed until its discovery in 1930. Tyson and his team creating an exhibit for the planetarium did not include Pluto in its models of planets. When this was discovered, and when the decision to leave Pluto out was found to be deliberate, Tyson became possibly the most hated astronomer on the planet. In *The Pluto Files: The Rise and Fall of America's Favorite Planet* (Norton), he has reported his own role in the controversy. There are serious scientific themes here, but this is a fun book. Tyson doesn't seem like a person who would relish bothering anybody, but he is instead amused by all the fuss, and much of his book is hilarious. Nonetheless, he has used it (always the teacher) to give a history of

our knowledge about Pluto, to illustrate the way science handles categories and conflict, and to demonstrate the astonishing difficulties of making a good definition. The problem of naming things properly, and thereby classifying them, shows up all the time in biology, but is rarer in astronomy.

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