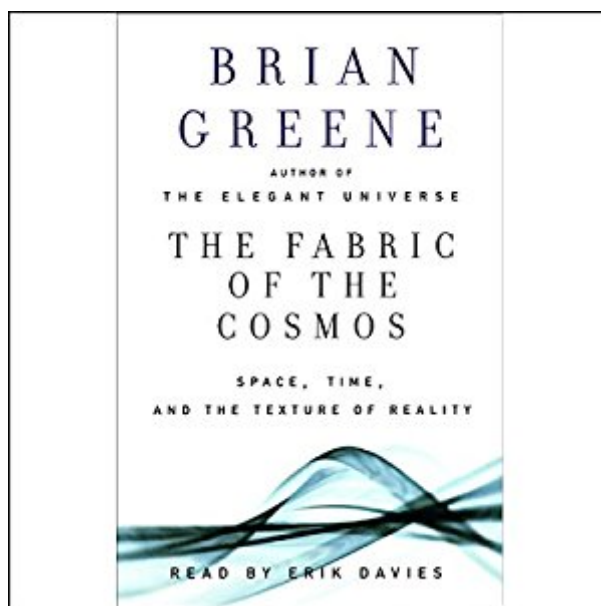


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The Fabric Of The Cosmos: Space, Time, And The Texture Of Reality



Synopsis

From Brian Greene, one of the world's leading physicists and author of the Pulitzer Prize finalist *The Elegant Universe*, 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 has set himself a daunting task: to explain non-intuitive, mathematical concepts like String Theory, the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, and Inflationary Cosmology with analogies drawn from common experience. 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 instantaneously coordinate their behavior, 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. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

The effort to explain theories and hypotheses that are largely defined and limited only mathematically, without the explanatory mathematics (which, of course, I wouldn't understand anyway), seems to have forced Greene to invoke repeated analogy and "what ifs." The problem comes, once again repeatedly, as he often morphs the "what if" into a sort of given, or postulate. To be sure, he eventually comes back to "of course, this is hypothetical," with or without a reference to

supporting math or, occasionally, experimental data. I often found myself dwelling on exceptions to his explanations and analogies, exceptions that might have been explained away by the math, or might not. Greene's reliance on analogy was often frustrating. That kind of attempt to simplify was so incomplete that, rather than causing an "aha" of understanding, it caused me to think, "yes, but the analogy isn't the way things really are; what's the real story?" As with many electronic book versions, one has to figure out just how modern the data and information are. I wanted something "cutting edge," but found that the book was written over a decade ago and, by checking the Web, found that some of the hypotheses have progressed. Before downloading science books, check the copyright date, not just the date of the electronic edition. Many of the paragraphs are unmercifully long, filling whole pages (at least on my iPad). All in all, though, a fine book, and the second of Greene's that I've read.

I love how he chooses the theme of "what is space and time" and continually ties content of the book into the theme. Many of these concepts I have read about before but I love seeing them from the new angle that Greene provides. IMO this is a masterfully written book that is well worth the read. I will warn it gets heavy at times and you might not want to read this if you haven't already gotten the basic grasp of relativity, cosmology and a bit of quantum theory (even if you are a novice to the concepts it's still really good as he contains much of the heavier content in self contained sections you can skip without losing the tale he spins). Greene is truly great at presenting complex, subtle and difficult scientific theories and concepts and explaining the current state of cutting edge physics.

For the uninitiated in physics, this book is a bible. Can't thank Mr Greene or show my gratitude enough. Imagine, going out of this universe without putting life on earth in perspective. Feel humbled with the new knowledge. Mr Greene has precisely written this book with the idea of human lives on periphery of knowledge, like mine, know about it in a simple and delightful manner. Knowledge has never been so much fun. From the understanding of space and time, or spacetime--whether true or a matter of our imagination--to gravitational fields, dark matter, entropy, electrons, protons, neutrons, quarks, time machine, Mr Greene is lucid, comprehensive, sequential and a magician. Such men might not get Nobel prize but are no less heroes in lighting up the lives of those who barely comprehend it. Part of it is inertia on the part of receivers, largely its' due to technical gravity which writers impart to subject such as physics. More power to Mr Greene. A must read.

This is the best book I've read on the subject so far. As a layperson I have been dipping in and out of books about Quantum Physics for over 25 years. I find Brian Greene to be brilliant at explaining mind-bending concepts by using relatively simple frameworks and well placed humour. I am forever indebted to Chewie for helping me to understand the finer points of special relativity. No math is required to enjoy Fabric of the Cosmos but Greene takes the reader to the very brink of equations by adding succinct end-notes for the 'mathematically inclined'. This book is a must read for both the curious 'dipper' and the serious student. This is the first book I have read by Brian Greene, I look forward to reading his others.

First and foremost this book has given me the best understanding of string theory that I have had. I also clarified my grasp of Einstein's relativity - especially the concept that one's moving at near light-speed will slow time. I don't get along with math above the algebra level, so this all-verbal approach to explaining current theoretical physics is critical for me. Toward the end, he spends some time theorizing about time-travel and worm-holes which I consider science-fantasy, but following that there is a final analysis of some additional aspects of string theory that I found informative. There is a good chance that I will not live to see a final determination on the applicability of string theory to the fabric of the universe, so I appreciate any opportunity to get a better grasp on it while I can.

This book is the twin brother of Greene's first book "The Elegant Universe". As usual, it is simple, descriptive, encompassing and covering a lot of topics. The emphasis in this book was not the String theory, but still discussed in less details. Greene predicted the Higgs boson and gravitational waves back in 2005, sure enough they are confirmed at 2012 and 2016. He also predicts that spacetime concepts could still be modified and may be supplanted. We still have to wait and see, but I believe every word he says. This book is a keeper and needs to be visited again. This book is a must read and deserves 5 stars.

I think my review's title sums up my feelings on this. There is no Pulitzer Prize category for science books. Consequently they don't win the General Nonfiction award very often. It takes a monumental pure science book to win that award such as have Carl Sagan and E.O. Wilson. Brian Greene's book was the runner up but certainly shows that he belongs in the class with the true greats of observing and explaining complex science in simple terms. This book gets my highest endorsement.

After reading it you will walk away with a solid foundational understanding of modern cosmology and how we got to this understanding.

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