



Fear of Physics: A Guide for the Perplexed

By Lawrence M. Krauss

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Fear of Physics is a lively, irreverent, and informative look at everything from the physics of boiling water to cutting-edge research at the observable limits of the universe. Rich with anecdotes and accessible examples, it nimbly ranges over the tools and thought behind the world of modern physics, taking the mystery out of what is essentially a very human intellectual endeavor.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Krauss (*Cosmic Strings*), who teaches physics at Yale University, delivers a three-part lecture for lay readers on today's dominant research questions in theoretical physics. In six broad-ranging chapters with such titles as "The Art of Numbers" and "The Search for Symmetry," he examines and explains "the tools that guide physicists in their work." The accomplishments and views of such giants of modern physics as Einstein, Feynman and Heisenberg are used to illustrate the inventiveness required of those in the field. While Krauss acknowledges that this is a limited selection of ideas--the "hidden realities" of physics, not its stuff--he nonetheless serves quantum mechanics well. Also well-served are the interests of the general reader as Krauss, persistently hewing to the basics, never falls into patronization or catchy metaphor. Supplemented by Larry Gonick and Art Huffman's *The Cartoon Guide to Physics* , this is a primer on the wonders of physics. Library of Science selection.

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From Library Journal

In describing "the flavor of physics" and how physicists "do" and have "done" physics, this short, charming, quick-paced book conveys the joy of "making new connections" in the physical world. Aiming his book at the nonscientist, the author hopes to give readers their own insight into the wonder associated with the art of physics and the symmetry and hidden realities of the world. Krauss, a professor of theoretical physics at Yale University who teaches a course called *Physics for Poets*, insistently reminds readers that physics is a part of "our cultural experience," a part of who we are and even that we are. Highly recommended.

- *Diane M. Fortner, Univ. of California Lib., Berkeley*

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From Kirkus Reviews

Physics made easy this is not. Physics for the sophisticated but nontechnical, maybe. Krauss is a theoretical physicist who teaches one of those physics-for-poets courses at Yale. This volume, though, is a lofty view of certain unifying themes with particular reference to particle physics and quantum mechanics. The first section deals with process, describing how physicists work by excluding the irrelevant. Thus a cow can be reduced to a sphere or maybe a sphere attached by a pipe to a smaller sphere. By a simple application of scaling laws relating to area and volume, one can show that a huge "supercow" is not possible without radically altering the dimensions or the materials involved. Galileo excluded the effects of the medium to demonstrate that all objects fall at the same rate, and so on. Process also depends on mathematics, so Krauss enlarges on the use of orders-of-magnitude notation in science. In the second section, he explains how scientific revolutions (pace Thomas Kuhn) do not throw out the past so much as extend and revise theory to suit new scales of observation. So we go from Galileo and Newton to Einstein and special relativity to Hawking and black holes, with emphasis on how fundamental laws of force and motion hold at one scale but are revised at the quantum level. The last parts of the book are really very elegant discussions of unifying principles and symmetries, such as the equivalence of mass and energy and electricity and magnetism. Krauss introduces gauge theory, argues for the superconducting supercollider to seek the Higgs particle, discusses the possible "end" of physics, and--new to books of this type--describes condensed matter physics, by which one can demonstrate that water and iron behave the same way at certain critical points. Less a guide for the perplexed than a theoretical introduction to the weirdness and beauty of the universe. --
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Users Review

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