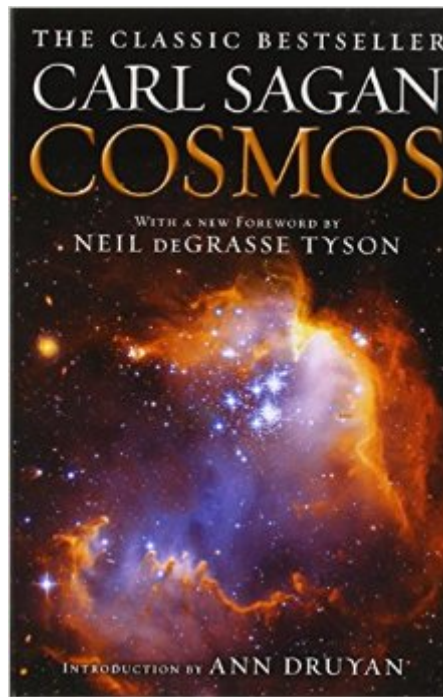


The book was found

Cosmos



Synopsis

RETURNING TO TELEVISION AS AN ALL-NEW MINISERIES ON FOXCosmos is one of the bestselling science books of all time. In clear-eyed prose, Sagan reveals a jewel-like blue world inhabited by a life form that is just beginning to discover its own identity and to venture into the vast ocean of space. Featuring a new Introduction by Sagan's collaborator, Ann Druyan, full color illustrations, and a new Foreword by astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, Cosmos retraces the fourteen billion years of cosmic evolution that have transformed matter into consciousness, exploring such topics as the origin of life, the human brain, Egyptian hieroglyphics, spacecraft missions, the death of the Sun, the evolution of galaxies, and the forces and individuals who helped to shape modern science. Praise for Cosmos

• "Magnificent . . . With a lyrical literary style, and a range that touches almost all aspects of human knowledge, Cosmos often seems too good to be true."

• "The Plain Dealer" • "Sagan is an astronomer with one eye on the stars, another on history, and a third on his mind on the human condition."

• "Newsday" • "Brilliant in its scope and provocative in its suggestions . . . shimmers with a sense of wonder."

• "The Miami Herald" • "Sagan dazzles the mind with the miracle of our survival, framed by the stately galaxies of space."

• "Cosmopolitan" • "Enticing . . . iridescent . . . imaginatively illustrated."

• "The New York Times Book Review"

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*, tells the story of 15 billion years of cosmic history like no one else can. The book shows how broad and deep Carl's interests extend and draws the reader into a world of fascination. Although the book is primarily about how science has developed in our society the book touches on subjects such as history, philosophy, religion, cultures and so fourth. The book is written in simple terms and is understandable to those without a background in science. Carl has an amazing ability to write with such enthusiasim and sincerity. Although the book was written at the height of the cold war it reflects an overall optimisim and hope for our species and planet. Carl Sagan is a remarkable human being and humanitarian as is reflected in all of his books. *Cosmos* is in some way his manifesto and I believe his best book. Carl's death was a loss not just to science but also to our species. Carl Sagan is my favourite author and *Cosmos* my favourite book. I recommend *Cosmos* to all of those who can read! *****!!!

As one of the great astronomer-writers of the Twentieth Century, Carl Sagan was extraordinarily communicative with the non-scientific public, able and willing to take the time and trouble to break down the mysteries of the universe into comprehensible fragments. The purpose of this book, which can be considered a companion to the acclaimed television series, is to explain what we know about the universe from a cosmological perspective and why we need to know more about it. Physicists often talk of the unity of the branches of physics: the interrelation and application of mechanics, thermodynamics, electricity and magnetism, and optics to the motion of everything from galaxies to subatomic particles. Similarly, Sagan's major theme is the unity of cosmology with the natural and physical sciences that define what we know about the Earth. Does the stifling, carbon dioxide-choked atmosphere of Venus imply anything about the greenhouse effect on Earth? Was a nearby cosmic explosion called a supernova indirectly responsible for the disappearance of the dinosaurs? What would be the biological consequences for the survivors of a global nuclear war? The answers to these questions are vital to the continuation of life as we know it. Sagan also identifies cosmology with its own history. He lavishes reverent detail on the ancient Greek and Alexandrian study of the stars and planetary motions, the pioneering work by the Renaissance scientists Brahe, Kepler, Copernicus, Huygens, and others, and the men who revolutionized science with the formulation of laws of motion, Newton and Einstein. The scope of "*Cosmos*" is tremendous, from the farthest expanses of the universe containing a hundred billion galaxies in addition to our own Milky Way, at the end of a spiraling arm of which our solar system is located; down to the lone electron circling the nucleus of a hydrogen atom, the most plentiful single entity in the cosmos and the source of everything we know, love, and are. In between there is discussion of the unmanned

spacecraft expeditions to investigate "our" planets: Mars with its boulder-strewn, desert-like terrain; the gaseous giant Jupiter; Io, a Jovian moon of incredible redness, spotted with volcanic orifices and resembling an unappealing sauce-covered meatball; Saturn with its ice rings. Would these worlds contain life? Using what we know about the evolution of life on Earth, Sagan hypothesizes how different types of lifeforms might develop on worlds with different environments. Even a casual interest in cosmology requires a fascination with astronomical distances and unthinkably long spans of time in which a human lifetime is but a blink of an eye. However, Sagan seems to write also for those who would rather relate cosmic arcana to familiar terms, and in this sense he is a grand entertainer: A thought experiment that provides a simple but fanciful illustration of the concept of black holes uses the tea party scene in "Alice in Wonderland" as a setting. "Cosmos" neither complicates unnecessarily nor insults your intelligence; very few "popular" science books will capture your imagination so well.

I first saw the series COSMOS on TV in about 1980 when I was about 12, and have been searching for similar material ever since. Carl Sagan is able to capture the mystery and the beauty of astronomy, science, art and religion in a way that most people can follow, and in a way that is interesting and invigorating. He is a very clear thinker and presenter. And this book, based on that very popular TV series of the same name, I found in an old book store, which I immediately grabbed. Here was something of my childhood, and something very special. The book did not disappoint. It is filled with stunning images, photographs, illustrations, diagrams and so on. And the text is fun, enlightening, clear, visionary, and precise. Not surprising, since it is written by an astronomer at heart. It is also advisable to search around and buy the illustrated edition-the illustrations add much to the text. Carl places the earth on the shores of the cosmic ocean-the title of the first chapter. He traces religious, artistic and scientific investigations into the 'cosmos' throughout the millennia, and the amount of useful historical information he brings up is quite extraordinary. He draws together the thoughts of ancient cultures like the Greeks, Babylonians, Stone Age man, Renaissance thinkers, poets, artists, and famous scientists, and ties these in with many modern discoveries concerning the nature of the universe. One can see his strong leanings on the likelihood of extraterrestrial life and the SETI project between the lines, as well as his views on religion and its place in the human psyche. One particularly interesting piece describes the downfall of the old Greek science and the destruction of the library at Alexandria, and how these tie in with his views on history, science and religion in general. Carl Sagan is a very clear and thoughtful writer. It is obvious that his knowledge of human nature and science is vast and humane. He worries

much about the misuse of science, and the future of man. This book is a must for lovers of general science, human nature and destiny. As such it is a timeless classic. I'll close with the book's closing words: "For we are the local embodiment of a Cosmos grown to self awareness. We have begun to contemplate our origins: starstuff pondering the stars; organised assemblages of ten billion billion billion atoms considering the evolution of atoms; tracing their long journey by which, here at least, consciousness arose. Our loyalties are to the species and the planet. We speak for earth. Our obligation to survive is owed not just to ourselves but also to that Cosmos, ancient and vast, from which we sprung."

The content of this book makes it a classic. But the quality of the mass market edition fails to do it justice: the print is the tiniest I have ever seen (or not seen--who knew so many words could be crowded onto a page?). The covers are the event horizon beyond which legibility disappears. The layout is perfunctory and the paper cheap. Yes, mass markets are not printed for elegance, but this one sets a new low. For a few dollars more, the paperback edition, also available from , provides everything you were hoping for, including a large number of high-quality illustrations and photos, that, like the much more expensive hard cover edition, creates in the reader the sense of surprise and awe that Sagan intended.

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