



Human Universe

By Professor Brian Cox, Andrew Cohen

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Human life is a staggeringly strange thing. On the surface of a ball of rock falling around a nuclear fireball in the blackness of a vacuum the laws of nature conspired to create a naked ape that can look up at the stars and wonder where it came from.

What is a human being? Objectively, nothing of consequence. Particles of dust in an infinite arena, present for an instant in eternity. Clumps of atoms in a universe with more galaxies than people. And yet a human being is necessary for the question itself to exist, and the presence of a question in the universe – any question – is the most wonderful thing.

Questions require minds, and minds bring meaning. What is meaning? I don't know, except that the universe and every pointless speck inside it means something to me. I am astonished by the existence of a single atom, and find my civilisation to be an outrageous imprint on reality. I don't understand it. Nobody does, but it makes me smile.

This book asks questions about our origins, our destiny, and our place in the universe. We have no right to expect answers; we have no right to even ask. But ask and wonder we do.

Human Universe is first and foremost a love letter to humanity; a celebration of our outrageous fortune in existing at all. I have chosen to write my letter in the language of science, because there is no better demonstration of our magnificent ascent from dust to paragon of animals than the exponentiation of knowledge generated by science. Two million years ago we were apemen. Now we are spacemen. That has happened, as far as we know, nowhere else. That is worth celebrating.

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for Professor Brian Cox:

‘Cox’s romantic, lyrical approach to astrophysics all adds up to an experience that feels less like homework and more like having a story told to you. A really good story, too.’ Guardian

‘He bridges the gap between our childish sense of wonder and a rather more professional grasp of the scale of things.’ Independent

‘If you didn’t utter a wow watching the TV, you will while reading the book.’ The Times

‘Engaging, ambitious and creative.’ Guardian

‘In this book of the acclaimed BBC2 TV series, Professor Cox shows us the cosmos as we have never seen it before – a place full of the most bizarre and powerful natural phenomena.’ Sunday Express

‘Will entertain and delight ... what a priceless gift that would be.’ Independent on Sunday

About the Author

Professor Brian Cox, OBE is a particle physicist, a Royal Society research fellow, and a professor at the University of Manchester as well as researcher on one of the most ambitious experiments on Earth, the ATLAS experiment on the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland. He is best known to the public as a science broadcaster and presenter of the popular BBC Wonders trilogy.

Andrew Cohen is Head of the BBC Science Unit and the Executive Producer of the BBC series Human Universe. He has been responsible for a wide range of science documentaries including Horizon, the Wonders trilogy and Stargazing Live. He is an honorary lecturer in Life Sciences at the University of Manchester and lives in London with his wife and three children.

Users Review

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Edmund Morrissette:

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Craig Rushing:

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