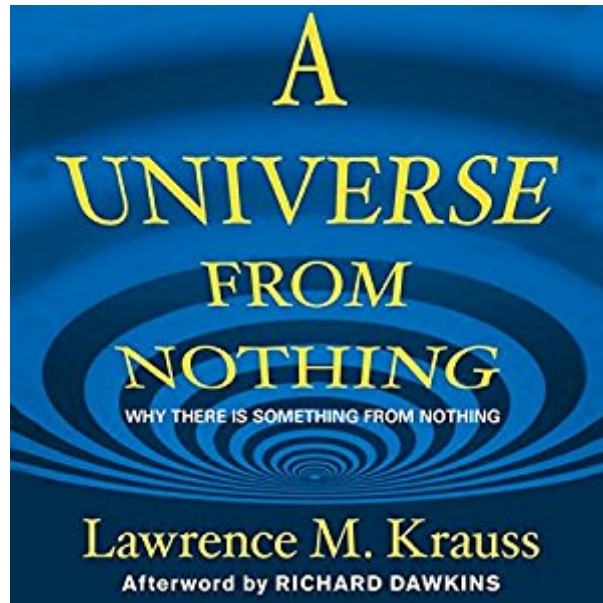


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A Universe From Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing



Synopsis

Where did the universe come from? What was there before it? What will the future bring? And finally, why is there something rather than nothing? Krauss' answers to these and other timeless questions, in a wildly popular lecture on YouTube, has attracted almost a million viewers. The last of these questions in particular has been at the center of religious and philosophical debates about the existence of God, and it's the supposed counterargument to anyone who questions the need for God. Scientists have, however, historically focused on more pressing issues-such as figuring out how the universe actually functions, which could help us to improve our quality of life. In this cosmological story that rivets as it enlightens, pioneering theoretical physicist Lawrence Krauss explains groundbreaking scientific advances that turn the most basic philosophical questions on their head. One of the few prominent scientists to have actively crossed the chasm between science and popular culture, Krauss reveals that modern science is indeed addressing the question of why there is something rather than nothing-with surprising and fascinating results. The beautiful experimental observations and mind-bending theories are all described accessibly, and they suggest that not only can something arise from nothing, something will always arise from nothing. With his characteristic wry humor and clear explanations, Krauss takes us back to the beginning of the beginning, presenting recent evidence for how our universe evolved-and the implications for how it will end. It will provoke, challenge, and delight listeners as it looks at the most basic underpinnings of existence in a whole new way. And this knowledge that our universe will be quite different in the future has profound consequences and directly affects how we live in the present. As Richard Dawkins described it, this could potentially be the most important scientific book with implications for supernaturalism since Darwin.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A Universe from Nothing by Lawrence M. Krauss "A Universe from Nothing" is the fascinating book about how our universe came from nothing. Using the latest in scientific knowledge, his expertise and the innate ability to explain very complex topics in accessible manner earns this book five stars. Lawrence Krauss takes us on an exciting voyage of discovery that helps us understand the universe and further whets our appetite for more knowledge. This 224-page book is composed of the following eleven chapters: 1. A Cosmic Mystery Story: Beginnings, 2. A Cosmic Mystery Story: Weighing the Universe, 3. Light from the Beginning of Time, 4. Much Ado About Nothing, 5. The Runaway Universe, 6. The Free Lunch at the End of the Universe, 7. Our Miserable Future, 8. A Grand Accident?, 9. Nothing Is Something, 10. Nothing Is Unstable, and 11. Brave New Worlds.

Positives: 1. This book is truly something! A page turner. 2. A thought-provoking, inspirational quest for knowledge...I loved it! 3. A profound book that is intelligible. An achievement in its own right. Very complex topics accessible to the masses. Thank you. 4. Elegant prose with conviction. Lucid and clarity in a world of dark matter. 5. A journey of cosmological discoveries. 6. Effective use of charts and illustrations. 7. I have a much better understanding of our universe as a result of this book and most importantly it has only whet my appetite for even more knowledge...and that's why I read. 8. A love affair with science and for good reason. The three key principles of scientific ethos. 9. Startling conclusions are presented. The author does a wonderful job of letting us know what we do know versus what we don't know. 10. Some of the greatest discoveries presented.

The explanation of Big Bang cosmology and general relativity was excellent. I learned a lot about both from reading the first parts of the book. Pages one through 21 are definitely a good way of starting off the book, with a complete explanation of the evidence for the Big Bang and simple diagrams to answer "Where is the center of the universe?". Indeed, even the critics of his thesis seem to agree that he did a good job of explaining science. I also enjoyed a lot of the humor in the book, like the jokes about the geometry skills of American high school students and the stereotype of the graduate student as a slave who does work the professors don't want to. The afterword from Richard Dawkins was beautiful as well. As somebody interested in the philosophy of physics, particularly the origins of the universe, I was excited to read this book. I wanted to see the argument

that was presented by Krauss in favor of the idea that the universe came from nothing, especially after reading Quentin Smith's argument for the same idea in *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology*. Unfortunately, I found the title of the book to be erroneous. The nothing that Lawrence Krauss describes in this book is not nothing. He is not describing the beginning of the universe from nothing, but the beginning of the universe from a quantum vacuum, which is described by physical laws and takes place in space-time. I don't think the content of the book lives up to the title. There is a debate in physics about whether virtual particles have real, ontological status, or if they are just results of equations and have no further implications on reality. I wish he had given more attention to this issue, because he didn't establish anything further than the fact that the equations imply their existence.

This shorter volume from Krauss marks his transition from talented science expositor to science champion. His crisp, clear and thorough discussion combines with a strong problem-focused narrative to make this book a deserving popular science landmark. Some discussion retraces developments in physics that Krauss meticulously covers in previous longer books but this is necessary for a one-stop treatise on one of the most important topics in modern physics. Notes and references are omitted, acceptably in my opinion considering the briefer nature of this book. The development of the topic, the provision of a context through his intimate familiarity with the work of earlier physicists, and Krauss's offhand capacity to reduce complexity and hyperbole to a well rounded paragraph make this book pleasurable, rewarding and complete. Krauss charts the development of theories regarding the universe's dimensions, mass, energy, inflation and homogeneity, touching on the importance of quantum fluctuations, dark energy and related phenomena. With this background, he explains Perlmutter's challenge, in 1996, to Krauss's statement that empty space might contain energy. With perfect timing, this book arrives just as Perlmutter, Reis and Schmidt gain their Nobel Prizes for confirming the accelerating expansion of the universe and as WMAP experiments hint at dark photons, all grist for the mill in the universe from nothing theory. The treat at the end of this exposition is Krauss's scenario that humanity now enjoys the best opportunity, in terms of available evidence, to understand the universe's origin, evolution and fate. During this period, albeit billions of years long, we are able to still detect cosmic background radiation and view receding galaxies before they red-shift out of existence.

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