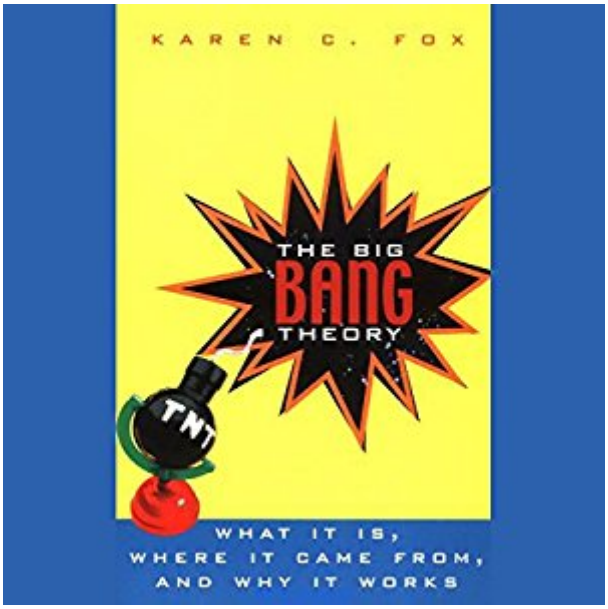
The Big Bang Theory: What It Is, Where It Came From, And Why It Works



Synopsis

Everything you've ever wanted to know about the Big Bang!The Big Bang Theory takes a compelling and lively look at one of the most fascinating ideas in modern science. The first in a series of fun, concise books on the most significant scientific theories, The Big Bang Theory offers an accessible and complete road map to the most intriguing model yet for the birth of the cosmos.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book appears to be aimed at novice readers, and I have commented on that basis. At 200 or so small format pages, the paperback attempts to be both entertaining and lively in style. But in my opinion this book misses the mark, and is full of errors, ambiguities and sloppy language. It is plain bad!For instance, when talking about the naked eye view of the sky, she indicates that the planets in their various motions "would get even larger, as if they were coming closer". I presume the author means "brighter" rather than "larger" since to the naked eye, none of the planets subtends a disc. This is typical of the sloppy language used throughout - to those who know, the sloppiness is recognisable as such, but to the true novice, how potentially misleading!The book frequently wanders into the relationship between philosophy, religion and science, not only in regard to the early cosmologies, but also the acceptance (and lack of acceptance) of the Big Bang in the 1950's and 60's as it and the science of cosmology became more well established.The second part of the book addresses the Big Bang Theory and its "problems" subsequent to the discovery of the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB). This introduces inflationary Big Bang models, and the curvature of space as a function of the mass content of the Universe and so on. In attempting to describe how

the expansion rate of the Universe can be deduced from the observed properties of the distant galaxies, the author becomes thoroughly confused and confusing (even more so than is usual for this tome).

This book was written in 2002 and is, on the whole, very up to date. It comes in at a very reasonable 206 pages (including the Index). It has a silly cover, but don't let it fool you into thinking it lacks depth. It actually is a great little book that is, on the whole, well researched and well written. It covers all of the salient points within the historical evolution of the accepted modern cosmological model of Universal origins. The biggest questions about the big bang are what does it say and how does it say it? This book answers those two questions briefly, but adroitly. It spends just enough time on each concept and delves deeply enough to bring clarity to this complex subject. It is unafraid to look at the triumphs (high energy particle physics, an expanding universe, big-bang nucleosynthesis, the Cosmic Background Radiation) and the pitfalls (homogeneity, flatness, horizon and magnetic monopole problems) within the model.The book has 7 Chapters and is broken up into two main sections. Section 1 is titled,"How we came to believe the big bang theory." I actually am not offended by her use of this phrase. Rather than be afraid to consider the big bang theory a belief, if it is given the respect it is due (which Karen does quite well), then we can readily admit that when it comes to much of cosmology, we have to have a starting point, an assumption, an ideology, in short, a belief. Section 2 is titled, "How good a theory is it?" Karen C. Fox deserves credit for not holding back, giving us its blemishes and its warts (she calls them "glitches" a term I think fits: personally I think the biggest wart of the big bang theory is its failure to *predict* inflation.

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