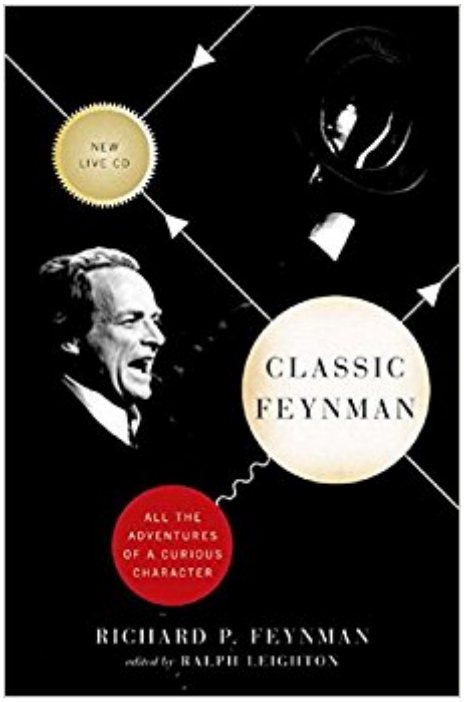
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Classic Feynman: All The Adventures Of A Curious Character



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Synopsis

An omnibus edition celebrating a great scientific mind and a legendary American original including a live recording. Richard Feynman (1918-1988) thrived on outrageous adventures. In the phenomenal national bestsellers "Surely You’re Joking, Mr. Feynman!" and "What Do You Care What Other People Think?" the Nobel Prize-winning physicist recounted in an inimitable voice his adventures trading ideas on atomic physics with Einstein and Bohr and ideas on gambling with Nick the Greek, painting a naked female toreador, accompanying a ballet on his bongo drums, solving the mystery of the Challenger disaster, and much else of an eyebrow-raising, hugely entertaining, and astounding nature. One of the most influential and creative minds of recent history, Feynman also possessed an unparalleled ability as a storyteller, a delightful coincidence celebrated in this special omnibus edition of his classic stories. Now packaged with an hour-long audio CD of the 1978 "Los Alamos from Below" lecture, Classic Feynman offers readers a chance to finally hear a great tale in the orator’s own voice.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Not many Nobel laureates in physics amuse themselves by playing the bongo drums and cracking safes. But the capricious personality of Richard Feynman contained more than a few surprises. And it is the sheer unpredictability of this high-spirited genius--partial to the company of Las Vegas showgirls when not in the Caltech lecture hall--that has attracted so many readers to his disarmingly candid memoirs, Surely You’re Joking, Mr. Feynman! and What Do You Care What Other People

Think? Now chronologically collated into one omnibus volume (packaged with a CD of one of Feynman's signature lectures), these memoirs display perhaps the most flamboyant personality in modern science. So colorful are some of the episodes here gathered that readers might forget (as Freeman Dyson remarks in his perceptive foreword) the careful and painstaking theorist who probed the atom with rare insight. Still, this collection does include Feynman's account of how--in quite casual circumstances--he spontaneously devised scientific experiments to determine the characteristics of ants' feet and humans' noses. Though the essays are available elsewhere, the autobiographical structure adds interest for the author's many fans. Bryce ChristensenCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

Richard P. Feynman was born in 1918 and grew up in Far Rockaway, New York. At the age of seventeen he entered MIT and in 1939 went to Princeton, then to Los Alamos, where he joined in the effort to build the atomic bomb. Following World War II he joined the physics faculty at Cornell, then went on to Caltech in 1951, where he taught until his death in 1988. He shared the Nobel Prize for physics in 1965, and served with distinction on the Shuttle Commission in 1986. A commemorative stamp in his name was issued by the U.S. Postal Service in 2005.Ralph Leighton, Richard Feynman's great friend and collaborator, now lives in northern California.

This was a very good book. With a character as unique and unorthodox as Feynman, anything he chooses to write about will be very entertaining. That is the case with this book. This book is a large collection of anecdotes taken from other autobiographies. Some of the anecdotes include Feynman's time working at Los Alamos during the Manhattan Project, his childhood and many others. All of the anecdotes in this book are very fascinating. They can be touching, humorous or both at the same time. Regardless of the tone, Feynman's witty and eccentric views and opinions will keep you from putting this book down.Don't be intimidated by the fact that Feynman was theoretical physicist. This book is very accessible. Too be quite honest, there is not a lot of math in this book (save a few conceptual things here and there) so a working knowledge of math is not required to read this book. Feynman also doesn't write like a professor. What I mean is that the language is here is very simple, for the most, and doesn't end up sounding like a textbook.The reason I am only giving this book 4 stars and not five stars is because of the lack of mathematical depth. I had to read this book as part of a math class book report. Since I am very interested in math I thought that there would be some really cool stuff in here but the majority of the anecdotes don't really focus on math. The fact that I had to read this for a math class probably distorted my view and

altered my expectations a little bit. If I had read this without scholastic influence, this would definitely get a five star rating.

This autobiography of the great physicist Richard Feynman should appeal to all those readers who want to know about his private life and scientific activities in detail.However, most of the material is taken from two previous books, "Surely you're joking, Mr Feynman" and "What do you care what other people think?". Some of the "adventures" were already related by James Gleick in his biography of Feynman, "Genius".So people who own these books can do without this one, unless they are real Feynman fans(like me!).Another feature of this book is the CD which comes with it, and which contains a recording of a lecture by Feynman, covering most of the material of the Chapter entitled "Los Alamos from Below". I found this CD both entertaining and very useful, as it gives the listener a taste of what a lecture by Feynman sounded like. In fact, all the book, in its simplicity, sounds more like a series of lectures;and Feynman, in his distaste for "humanities", seems to enjoy "talking" to the public, with not a hint of literary artifice in his style!Of course, this could be seen as unbecoming such a brilliant mind, but Feynman keeps reminding the reader that he has no respect for anything but science(at one place, he talks about finding the professors of the philosophy department at Columbia particularly "inane").Some will also find his philandering a little exaggerated: but he is honest enough to admit that there is nothing he loves more than a "beautiful woman", and who could blame him?Finally, it is worthwhile noting that, if some top-notch scientists had also literary gifts (two major examples being PoincarÃƒÂ© and Einstein, whose writings are literary gems), Feynman couldn't care less: he even boasts that he does not give any importance to spelling mistakes, as long as the reader (or listener) understand what he is talking about! However, after reading his Nobel Banquet Speech , I was agreeably surprised with a much better style, which he even admits in the book. Talking about this speech, he says(p.343):"But then I said I received, all at once, a big pile of letters - I said it much better in the speech- reminding me of all the people that I knew; letters from childhood friends who jumped up when they read the morning newspaper and cried out 'I know him!he's that kid we used to play with and so on...'".Feynman seems to be quoting from memory, because this is not exactly what he said in the speech:"...victorious cries of 'I told you so' by those having no technical knowledge-their successful prediction being based on faith alone..."(see Nobelprize.org for the complete speech).

This is a a chronological compendium of the two best-selling Feynman general audience books. They (and he) are a trip! Dictated, they have the vernacular fun of Feynman's unpretentious style as

well as an insight into one of the great characters of the 20th century. In an odd way, they give us greater insight into the mind of a true genius than many more academic tomes. Funny, enlightening, awe-inspiring...a great read. A bonus: a CD of a classic Feynman lecture so you can get a feeling for his verbal delivery though there is an enormous amount of Feyman stuff on YouTube.

Reading Feynman’s public musings on his eccentric lifestyle is an absolute pleasure, but the most compelling part about "Classic Feynman" is Leighton’s deft hand at editing. For the most part, Leighton (a close friend of Feynman) is unnoticeable...but every so often, his voice emerges in a stray footnote and adds unexpected color to the narrative: when Feynman recounts meeting his future wife, for instance, Leighton points out that "despite reading through the manuscript several times, Feynman never noticed that ’Arlene’ was not how Arline spelled her own name" -- not to call out a factual inaccuracy, but to illustrate an aspect of Feynman’s character.It’s the little things that make "Classic Feynman" such a wonderful resource...even the annotated Table of Contents provides unexpected value by flagging which chapters were pulled from "Surely You’re Joking, Mr Feynman", which came from "What Do You Care What Other People Think", and which were new to "Classic Feynman."

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