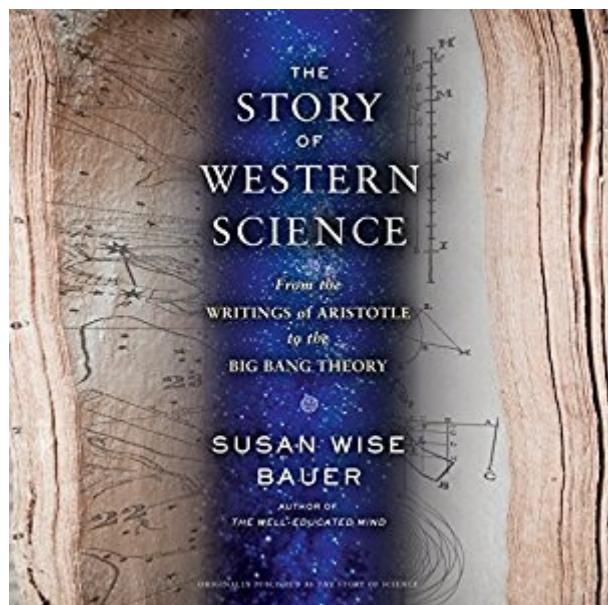


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The Story Of Western Science: From The Writings Of Aristotle To The Big Bang Theory



Synopsis

A riveting road map to the development of modern scientific thought. Far too often, public discussion of science is carried out by journalists, voters, and politicians who have received their science secondhand. The Story of Western Science shows us the joy and importance of reading groundbreaking science writing for ourselves and guides us back to the masterpieces that have changed the way we think about our world, our cosmos, and ourselves. Able to be referenced individually or listened to together as the narrative of Western scientific development, the book's 28 succinct chapters lead listeners from the first science texts by Hippocrates, Plato, and Aristotle through 20th-century classics in biology, physics, and cosmology. The Story of Western Science illuminates everything from mankind's earliest inquiries to the butterfly effect, from the birth of the scientific method to the rise of earth science and the flowering of modern biology. Each chapter recommends one or more classic books and provides entertaining accounts of crucial contributions to science, vivid sketches of the scientist-writers, and clear explanations of the mechanics underlying each concept. The Story of Western Science reveals science to be a dramatic undertaking practiced by some of history's most memorable characters. It reminds us that scientific inquiry is a human pursuit - an essential, often deeply personal, sometimes flawed, frequently brilliant way of understanding the world. In the tradition of her perennial best seller *The Well-Educated Mind*, Susan Wise Bauer delivers an accessible, entertaining, and illuminating springboard into the scientific education you never had.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is another outstanding contribution by Susan Wise Bauer. It walks you through the development of scientific thought and discovery through the ages, with pointers to where to find accessible copies of the primary source documents, and tips on what to get from reading them--including a website with links to free copies and excerpts of the primary sources where available. This book belongs on the shelf for any individual who would like a better grounding in where our major western scientific ideas come from, how they impacted other scientists, and how scientists build upon the work of others, whether that means confirming a theory or moving ideas in a new direction. Homeschoolers with high school students will also love this book, no matter what style of homeschooling is practiced; it is not a book only for classical homeschoolers. I already have plans for a high school level philosophy of science course, and my 14 year old has been sneaking the book off to read parts of it. He knows our course from it will be a couple of years away yet, but it was just too enticing.

This book is not so much about the history of science, it is about the great writings of science, looking at the key writings since the time of Aristotle. Author Susan Wise Bauer encourages the reader to explore the original works and specifies where the reader can find them. This is excellent as the advice is very specific and not something general such as "look online." I found the discussion fascinating and it has tempted me to find these old works. Ultimately, this book is about the history of science and it is excellent. And unlike a lot of history of science books, it covers biology as well. I strongly recommend this book for anyone interested in exploring these old writings but don't know where to start. Bauer writes in a conversational manner and the science is easy to understand so I can recommend this book for anyone interested in the history of science.

Everything has a history. Science and scientists are no exception. Bauer tells the most well-known stories in science and the most famous scientists and thinkers from contributions by people close to the scientists. Thus Galileo refuted Aristotle's view that heavy objects can only fall to the ground at the same time as lighter ones only if they fell from a greater height. Galileo's discoveries and thoughts also had an immense impact on Newton; and Newton himself, excelled after his feud with Robert Hooke and the Royal Society over his discovery that colours are merely refracted light - Hooke claimed that Newton had stolen his ideas. Similarly, the discovery of the structure of the DNA by Francis Crick and James Watson (and Rosalind Franklin) might not have taken place if Crick had not been goaded by Watson to ignore English conventions and stayed away from this field of study.

because another Englishman (Maurice Wilkins) had already started on it. Bauer's account of the race between Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace to the publication of their theories of evolution is, in comparison to the full stories of both men in their many biographies, a short but exciting story that is one of the most pulsating races of all time. And can a book of this nature overlook the 'Big Bang'? Certainly not. The story of the universe is told from the lenses of Edwin Hubble who began with the speculation that when we look into the cosmos we might be seeing not just stars but 'clusters of galaxies'. History and the universe is a complex web. We may not yet have the ultimate answer - if there is one - but Bauer has given us a rich little book to take with us on our contemplative journey.

This is a fantastic introduction to the people and the books that have created the modern world. Each chapter does a great job setting the context and introducing the major primary sources of the scientific canon. Just reading the chapters is an education in the history of science and ideas. An excellent resource for teens and adults who want to understand the context of science as it has been practiced for the past 2000 years.

While I'm only just into the beginning, I like how she leads me through the classics of science. Although I've read some of them before, I have never read them as a chronological series. BYU used to offer a distance uni class that I didn't get around to taking before they got rid of it. This, so far, has been a great substitute, sans college credit.

To be honest, when I picked this book up, I thought I would like it more. Essentially, this book is a summary of other books. This book is a selection of what Ms. Bauer considers to be the most important books in the history of science. I can't really quibble much with her choices. Any book that hits Newton's Principia and Darwin's On the Origin of Species has already covered the most important bases. After that, everything's gravy seasoned to taste. Perhaps it is the lack of conflict that was part of my disappointment. Anyway, the fact that I finished it is a testament to the fact that it's easy to read. And the books she's chosen give her a chance to cover science across the spectrum: biology, chemistry, geology, physics, etc. So, it's a nice summary. Still, I can do without the constant references to her website. And it's really all about reading the original texts, isn't it?

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