



# Black Holes and Baby Universes and Other Essays

By Stephen W. Hawking

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THIRTEEN EXTRAORDINARY ESSAYS SHED NEW LIGHT ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE—AND ON ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT THINKERS OF OUR TIME.

In his phenomenal bestseller *A Brief History of Time*, Stephen Hawking literally transformed the way we think about physics, the universe, reality itself. In these thirteen essays and one remarkable extended interview, the man widely regarded as the most brilliant theoretical physicist since Einstein returns to reveal an amazing array of possibilities for understanding our universe.

Building on his earlier work, Hawking discusses imaginary time, how black holes can give birth to baby universes, and scientists' efforts to find a complete unified theory that would predict everything in the universe. With his characteristic mastery of language, his sense of humor and commitment to plain speaking, Stephen Hawking invites us to know him better—and to share his passion for the voyage of intellect and imagination that has opened new ways to understanding the very nature of the cosmos.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 14 pieces, the author of *A Brief History of Time* examines astrophysics, current events and his own life. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Hawking is quite probably the most admired and recognizable figure in science today. His *A Brief History of Time* (LJ 4/15/88) was a surprise best seller that stimulated a public fascination with this man who, although stricken with a debilitating neurological disease, is widely regarded as the most brilliant theoretical physicist since Einstein. This new collection of essays and lectures will no doubt attract a large readership, but it is somewhat unbalanced. The biographical pieces are digressive and not particularly enlightening. Most pointless is the concluding piece, an interview in which Hawking expounds upon the eight records he would want if he were shipwrecked on a desert island. The scientific essays are much stronger and offer insight into a variety of cutting-edge issues in contemporary physics, though much of what is presented can be found in *Brief History*. Readers interested in Hawking's life are better advised to read John Gribbin and Michael White's *Stephen Hawking: A Life in Science* (LJ 5/1/92). Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 6/15/93.

- *Gregg Sapp, Montana State Univ. Libs., Bozeman*

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From Kirkus Reviews

Superstar physicist Hawking--whose *A Brief History of Time* (1988) is ensconced in the Guinness Book of Records for having had the longest bestseller-run in English-language history--returns with 11 essays and one interview, covering matters autobiographical, scientific, and philosophical. The autobiographical pieces share a sketchy, conversational tone and drop a few tasty nuggets: Hawking didn't learn to read until he was eight and proved to be (in the Einstein tradition) a mediocre student; if dropped on a desert island, he would listen to Mozart's Requiem and read *Middlemarch*. But even so, these pieces keep Hawking's inner life strictly under wraps. Most of the other essays, which tend to repeat themselves, cover the author's major scientific insights: that the universe is "neither created nor destroyed"; that space/time began 15 billion years ago and is finite but boundless, like the surface of a globe. Hawking cites as his "most surprising discovery" the realization that black holes are not self-enclosed but leak particles and radiation: This leads directly to his most recent enthusiasm, "baby universes," generated by black holes, which branch off from our own universe and sometimes return to it. Sometimes the going is thick ("the  $N=8$  theory has twenty-eight spin-1 particles"), but most of Hawking's arguments will be clear to educated laypeople. His weak suit is philosophy, and, indeed, he includes a mild-mannered attack on professional philosophers, many of whom find his discussions of the big questions--what is creation? does God exist?--to be, as he puts it, "naive and simple-minded." No matter: Hawking will be remembered for his physics, not his metaphysics. Not much new, but people feel smarter just by buying a Hawking book. This will sell. -- *Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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