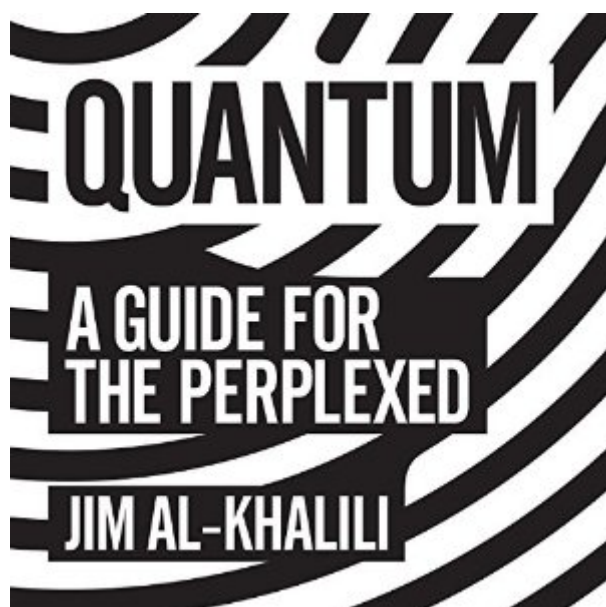


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Quantum: A Guide For The Perplexed



Synopsis

From Schrodinger's cat to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, this book untangles the weirdness of the quantum world. Quantum mechanics underpins modern science and provides us with a blueprint for reality itself. And yet it has been said that if you're not shocked by it, you don't understand it. But is quantum physics really so unknowable? Is reality really so strange? And just how can cats be half alive and half dead at the same time? Our journey into the quantum begins with nature's own conjuring trick, in which we discover that atoms - contrary to the rules of everyday experience - can exist in two locations at once. To understand this we travel back to the dawn of the 20th century and witness the birth of quantum theory, which over the next 100 years was to overthrow so many of our deeply held notions about the nature of our universe. Scientists and philosophers have been left grappling with its implications ever since. Read by Hugh Kermode.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I became interested in quantum theory after reading Brian Greene's "The Elegant Universe" about six months ago; since then I have gone to some lengths to find a book that would explain quantum theory in a way that was non-formal enough for me to understand but not excessively simplified. Until recently, I hadn't found any thing that fit this description -- until, that is, I ran into this book at my local book store. It is BY FAR the best explanation of quantum theory for someone who is relatively (or even completely) unfamiliar with it. The author explains the theory in a step by step fashion, not leaving anything implied or unsaid, but in no way is insulting to one's intelligence. As a philosophy grad student, I especially appreciated the chapter on the various interpretations of quantum theory, including the 'many-worlds' interpretation that reminded me very much of David

Lewis's metaphysical system (in which all possible worlds actually exist somewhere). I bought this book at 10:30 p.m. and had read half of it by the time I went to bed, and finished the rest of it the next day. It is that good! Highly, highly recommended.

This book is beautiful in all aspects. It is very well written, interesting and has great illustrations. The author takes a very complex and many times seemingly illogical topic and makes it both understandable and interesting. We are also given alternative views and told when the state of the art falls short of understanding. I would like to see a second edition in 10 years covering new advances in the topic. One of the best books I have seen in science in the past few years.

This is a very good book for the math-impaired know-something-but-not-much crowd. I took a semester of physics (mechanics) in college, and have read "A Brief History of Time" and watched the PBS thing on string theory, and something about quantum physics on the Discovery Channel, and decided that I wanted to know more. Being over 50 with an aging brain, I needed something that wasn't too technical, that didn't go too fast, but wasn't a children's book, and this was it. The first half of the book covers some history and the discoveries that made the development of quantum physics necessary. Also covered is the "weirdness" that seems to occur in the microscopic (quantum) world. I'll have to admit that on first reading, I only 'got' about 75% of what the author was presenting. If I read it again, I'll probably get more. And this is why I'm giving it 4 stars instead of 5. The second half of the book is not quite as brain intensive and covers speculation on the WHY of quantum physics. (Yeah, weird, huh? They know how it works, but not why it works.) In addition, some particle physics is covered, an overview of quarks and stuff, the effort toward a unified field theory (including a bit on string theory), some really cool discoveries, some unexplainable discoveries (like negative energy), why transistors and MRI's work, and quantum computers. I would like to have this book on my shelf so I could offer it to my friends to read. I will probably re-read parts of this book in the future. I wish I read this book 35 years ago.

This book has one of the best presentations of Quantum Mechanics that I've read. It explains three to four questions deep on most all concepts. The author seems to anticipate your next question and then deals with it a few pages later. The historical background leading up to the current theories is excellent without getting bogged down. He cuts to the heart of the principles and allows you to understand the difference between wave probability and actual quantum behavior at any given instant. He then goes on to practical applications that take advantage of this strange behavior. Now

I won't have to go to my grave without a decent understanding of the current state of the theory of matter.

After I viewed all of Jim's BBC shows on YOUTUBE, I was delighted to find this book. As a former Physics undergrad, I found it slick - beautiful - and well illustrated (although the point of several examples was obscure). I was, however, a tad bit disappointed in the explanations - some were very basic and clear while other discussions - particularly on the subject of entanglement - drifted into (what I call) Quanto-Speak much too quickly with little introduction or reader preparation. I loved what I read, but I can't say I'm any less perplexed than before. This is not your basic Quantum Physics for Dummies. If you're not looking for crystal clear explanations, this is an essential and enlightening introductory text - sure to pique your interest.F.

I knew just about as much as the next person regarding quantum physics before reading this book, and after reading it I feel I know a lot more. It's this kind of book that tends to turn my world upside-down for a little while, but after that discomfort fades I'm glad to know a little more (and that I know less) about the universe and can apply that knowledge, or lack of, to my own perspective on things. The book starts out with a quantum "magic trick" to hook the reader - and hook me it did - then proceeds to discuss the history, framework, and future of quantum physics. I found that the magic from the beginning tended to fade by the end of the book, but I still made it all the way through, which for me is saying a lot about whether a book is good or not. I'm not able to grasp mathematics very well - I'm more of a concept person - so the portions of the book that were mathematical were somewhat lost on me. However, the concepts got across to a certain extent. I will say that the Michio Kaku books I've read - Hyperspace and Visions - as well as Carl Sagan's books, did a lot more for me in terms of total amazement, but Quantum: A Guide for the Perplexed I feel was a very solid introduction to the quantum world for those like me who know a little and want to know more. I really enjoyed the graphic nature of the book; the illustrations are wonderful, and magical in themselves. The general feel of the book is nice, too. A lot of work was obviously done on the design in general, which I feel helped excite the material. One thing is for sure: Now that I've read this book the universe will never appear the same. There's no going back to thinking classically after learning the truths of what's really going on behind the curtain. I'm giving the book four stars, subtracting a star for the second half or so of the book that became a little more dry, cumbersome and forced than the first half. Very recommended.

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