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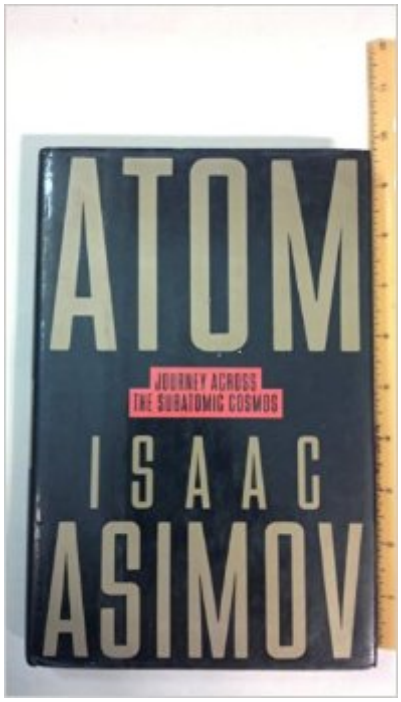
Atom: Journey Across The Subatomic Cosmos



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Synopsis

The legendary Isaac Asimov starts what is perhaps the finest of all his books with a simple query: How finely can a piece of matter be divided? But like many simple questions, this one leads readers on a far-flung quest for a final answer, a search that encompasses such fascinating phenomena as light and electricity and their components--strange but real bits of matter that challenge our assumptions about the very nature of time and space. 40 illustrations. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is an excellent summation of the progress made in discovering sub-atomic particles, It may not now be up to date (it was printed in 1991), but I would not forgo the learning within, or the Asimov method of presenting it. Isaac Asimov specialty was explaining difficult subjects to his readers. He did an admiral job keeping the subject matter interesting. Each short chapter is dedicated to a particle, ex. mesons, quarks, bosons. Each chapter also gives a little historical background of the search and discovery behind each particle and how it fits within the sub-atomic world. Nuclear physicists may have progressed far beyond this by now, but this is still a good book for piecing together the subatomic puzzle of particles.

i’m 15 this year and i am studying physics in school. after reading this book, i have understood more concepts much more easily. the diagrams included are great. Asimov is really a great writer ad i strongly recommend it to anyonee interested in physics.

’Atom’ is very easy to read. I have not had any calculus and therefore could not take physics in college. But the author presents the information without using anything more than everyday math! Also, I was taking a 101-level Physical Science class and the class’s textbook gave a bit of information about an atom here, and another bit there, and it was nearly impossible to pull the facts together into a single conceptual "model". However, this book does the job quite nicely (by the way, ’Atom’ also presents some other physical science material, such as properties of light and electomagnetic radiation and the four fundamental forces, in easier-to-understand language than the college book). I now have a clear understanding of the components of an atom - the oribiting electrons that form a "cloud" and the nucleus (composed of neutrons and protons - and their buliding blocks: quarks), other subatomic particles (leptons, hadrons, baryons, mesons, neutrinos, etc), the 2 fundamental forces that hold atomic nuclei together (the weak and strong nuclear force), and the concept of exchange particles that transmit the fundamental forces. I would have never obtained this kind of clarity from the college text. The author not only informs the reader of the facts, but also explains how they were discovered - this helps to increase the retention of the facts.

This is an excellent book for students of almost all ages (14 up). I was 14 when I read it, with no education in atoms, and I understood it perfectly. Asimov writes in a way that is extremely provocative and very informative. I highly recommed this book.

i enjoyed the book. it is easy to read except for the chapter on quarks, which is difficult to comprehend. i will recommend this book to every one who wishes to learn about the subatomic world. there is only one drawback for this book. it was published in 1991 and there have been more additions to the subatomic world since then. the history of the search for atom and its constituents is splendid. I love mathematics but i am too lazy to do it. so for folks who don’t like to dwell in mathematics to understand particle physics, this is the right book for you

Overall Asimov did an excellent job explaining some pretty difficult concepts. I most especially enjoyed the discussion of nuclear breakdown, ie, the conversion of one radioactive isotope into a completely different element. I never really understood the relationship between mass and energy and now I believe I do. Fascinating to say the least. My only problem was the amount of material covered in the book. I was not really interested in that much history and the discussion of the antiparticle. However, I knew what I was getting into prior to buying the book.

Most people probably know Isaac Asimov because of his fiction books.However, he is also a great writer of nonfiction works. "Atom" is a great exampleof his nonfiction work. It is also the best book on Atoms and subatomic particles I have ever read, and I have read several. Asimov takes an 'easy to understand' approach to the study of subatomic particles; starting from the beginning of the Atomic theory, all the way to quarks and neutrinos. The two best points about this book: (1) It is easy to understand (2) It is comprehensive and very detailed

I've read a lot of popular science books and the first half or so of this book was mostly a repeat of things that I've already read. But the last two chapters are amazing. He has a way of explaining things that makes it clear and interesting, and also of telling the story of the discovery, and the initial reactions to assertions. His side comments will make you laugh out loud and his explanations will help you come to an understanding of the topic.

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