A Short History of Nearly Everything (Audio CD)

Bill Bryson (Audio CD)
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Bill Bryson (Audio CD) : A Short History of Nearly Everything (Audio CD) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Short History of Nearly Everything (Audio CD):

45 of 45 people found the following review helpful. A most unusual but extremely interesting book!By startup_eng1A friend of mine recommended this book knowing that I like science. I'm used to reading about the sciences in single topics. This book surprised me in the amount of effort the author took to go through book after book of different sciences, both old and new, and proceeded to connect the dots into several cohesive stories about our home, planet Earth, and its residents. The biggest surprise is how little we truly know about both and just how much luck was involved that both exist in their present form. This book is an easy read and should be understandable to anyone who has a basic interest in science.Be prepared though to being overwhelmed because there is a lot of information in this book, with references to other works. This book is best read in sections allowing yourself some time to think about what you have learned; and I'm sure you are going to learn at least a few things.I highly recommend this book to anyone who would like to understand what an amazing place our planet is and life that exists on it.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "It is a curious fact that on Earth species death is, in the most literal sense, a way of life."By Alastair R FleckThis book, in common with just about everything Bill Bryson writes, is absolutely wonderful. It is an entertaining romp through, well, just about everything, as the title suggests. It is a potted history of science, mostly, which describes how we have studied this planet of ours and some of the astonishing conclusions that can be drawn from that study. Bryson's prose style is fluid and wickedly funny. To cite just a two examples:"Smith's revelation regarding strata heightened the moral awkwardness concerning extinctions. To begin with, it confirmed that

God had wiped out creatures not occasionally but repeatedly. This made Him seem not so much careless as peculiarly hostile....God, it appeared, hadn't wished to distract or alarm Moses with news of earlier, irrelevant extinctions.""We are each so atomically numerous and so vigorously recycled at death that a significant number of our atoms - up to a billion for each of us, it has been suggested - probably once belonged to Shakespeare. A billion more each came from Buddha and Genghis Khan and Beethoven, and any other historical figure you care to name. (The personages have to be historical, apparently, as it takes the atoms some decades to become thoroughly redistributed; however much you may wish it, you are not yet one with Elvis Presley.)"This book is chock-full of homages to famous scientists and many who were less lauded. There are some wild theories (and bad science) discussed, but always illustrated with surprising examples:"When you sit in a chair, you are not actually sitting there, but levitating above it at a height of one angstrom (a hundred millionth of a centimetre), your electrons and its electrons implacably opposed to any closer intimacy."Placing the human species within the context of the history of our planet, Bryson does end on a sobering note:"Most of what has lived on Earth has left behind no record at all....It is a curious fact that on Earth species death is, in the most literal sense, a way of life....99.99 per cent of all species that have ever lived are no longer with us. `To a first approximation,' as David Raup of the University of Chicago likes to say, `all species are extinct.' For complex organisms, the average lifespan of a species is only about four million years - roughly about where we are now."A thoroughly enjoyable and stimulating book which does not pretend to be scientific, but is more about scientists and how they have changed the way we look at, and live in, our world.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If I wanted, I could nitpick this book.By R. PryorSome parts aren't quite as fascinating as others, and there's even the very occasional, small mis-statement of fact (Don't take the thing about glass flowing downward over the centuries as gospel, because it's not). But taken as a whole: This book is GREAT. It's so good, I, like many people, immediately read it a second time and took notes on all the stuff I found super-fascinating. Bryson not only gives you the straight dope on the nature of the universe and life's history in it, he gives you a lot of compelling human interest stories on the people who made the major discoveries and how they came about (Let me just say: Many, many scientists are at least as weird, vain, vindictive, stubborn, dishonest, or crazy as people in general. And many, many times, the chief roadblock in the way of scientific progress has been the united front of a face-palmingly hidebound scientific establishment). I love anecdotal stuff, and Bryson's retailing of the chain of events that led to the publication of Newton's "Prinicipia" (involving a forty-shilling bet, the astronomer Edmond Halley, and a worst-selling book called "The History Of Fishes") is, to me, worth the price of the book all by itself. And that's just one of dozens and dozens of fascinating stories. By the time you finish this book, you almost can't fail to have a better picture of certain aspects of the universe (like, for example, how mind-blowingly big it really is), as well as a better understanding of how even the greatest scientists and thinkers can be, at times, spectacularly mistaken. Is it a perfect book? No. But the only people I WOULDN'T recommend it to are people who just have no interest whatsoever in science or scientific history.

One of the world's most beloved and bestselling writers confronts his greatest challenge: to understand--and, if possible, answer--the oldest, biggest questions ever posed about the universe, everything from the Big Bang to the rise of civilization. Abridged. 5 CDs.