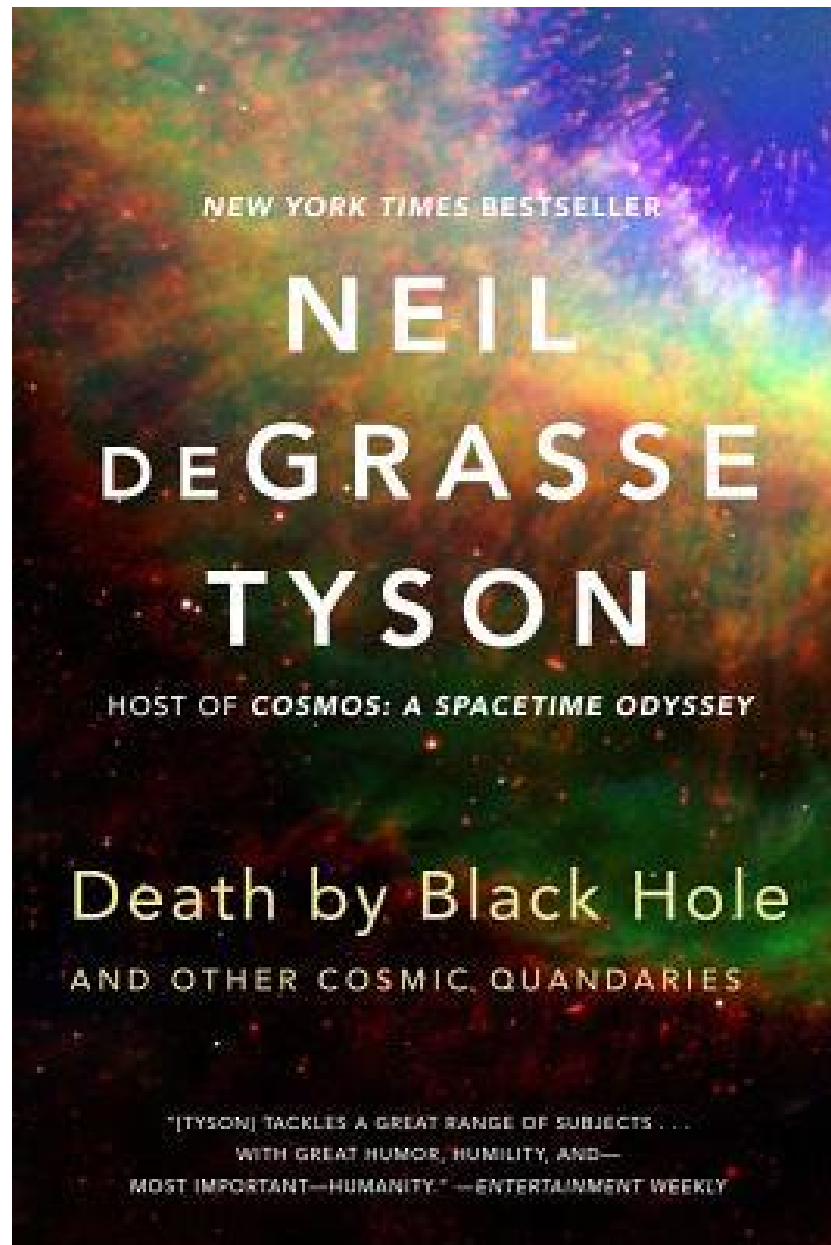


# Death by Black Hole: And Other Cosmic Quandaries Book PDF Download



**By:**  
**Neil deGrasse Tyson**

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### Samadrita

Neil deGrasse Tyson is a force to reckon with.

But he is not Carl Sagan.

While Sagan must have smiled down kindly on your meek acknowledgement of ignorance regarding, say, black holes, Tyson will have most probably given you the stink eye or aimed a sarcastic jibe at your apathy, before proceeding to explain why black holes still remain a topic of much speculation in the community of astrophysicists worldwide.

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Tyson does not pull any punches in this collection of essays while slamming the news media, who more often than not, come off as ill-informed hacks doing a shoddy job of reporting facts in the field of space science, forever (stupidly) claiming how scientists are baffled by so-and-so new developments.

Or snidely commenting on the Hollywood exercise of producing multi-million dollar sci-fi films which badly butcher the scientific aspects of such ventures by inserting factually incorrect observations in scenes and dialogues. (there's a brilliant anecdote concerning James Cameron's

in this regard and the

### Brad

This is a very fun read for all you science nerds... not only being clear and humorous but

wide-ranging and careful to build up a number of those necessary building blocks of knowledge but doing it precisely in order to slam you with the good stuff later.

Like how you'd DIE IN A BLACK HOLE... :)

To belabor the obvious by the title. :)

Seriously, this book gives us a ton of great ways to die and not just by black hole. I really appreciated that. :)

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Seriously, this book gives us a ton of great ways to die and not just by black hole. I really appreciated that. :)

I'd characterize this book as an easy to intermediate stage science book that's very far from being dull and it has a minimum of equations. I'm sure everyone has heard of thermodynamics and  $E=MC^2$  and Drake's equation, after all, but what really thrilled me about this was the truly wide array of subjects and Tyson's conversational tone.

## Chloe

Within my skull, where all of those vital pieces of data surrounding science are supposed to be stored, there is instead a vast beaker-shaped void of ignorance. In high school, while we were supposed to be studying the musculature of the formaldehyde-soaked amphibians pinned ignominiously to their coffinesque metal trays, I was far more interested in studying the effects of adding fire to small green buds. During my brief time wandering the hallways of the University world, I was able to do away

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ignominiously to their coffinesque metal trays, I was far more interested in studying the effects of adding fire to small green buds. During my brief time wandering the hallways of the University world, I was able to do away with my prerequisite requirement by taking an "Arts of Science" course tailor-made for those more interested in empathy than entropy and, while I did manage to get a crocodile on my report card, all I took away from that class was an abiding hatred for hippies. The long and the short of all this is that I didn't know a quasar from a neutron or a brown dwarf from a red giant (though Red Dwarf was a magnificent television series).

As a devout lover of science fiction and hi-tech gadgetry of all sorts, this was a matter of not a little shame for me. To resolve this I decided that it was time for me to fill in some of the (immense) gaps in my education the best way I know how- via book. Yet how to avoid having my eyes glaze over the moment someone started explaining cell structures or complex wave fields? Fortunately, as it often does, my television provided a solution when Stephen Colbert took a visit to the American Museum of Natural History's Hayden Planetarium and spoke with its Director, Neil deGrasse Tyson. Tyson, while just as geeky as you would expect from an astrophysicist, is phenomenally skilled at taking incredibly complex scientific theories and translating them into a Common English that even Stephen Colbert is able to understand. My fate was sealed. This man was the ideal author to ease myself into the brave new world of stellar science.

is a collection of essays the Tyson penned for

magazine over the course of several years. Each essay addresses a different topic, running the gamut from the birth of the universe, the history of astronomical discoveries, humankind's fixation on the red hills of Mars and the life-bringing water that may lay frozen away, all the way to the Pluto Wars (it's amazing just how contentious Pluto's status as planet is). Of course there's some overlap between the chapters and some facts get repeated but, rather than bugging me, I found it to be a good refresher of what had come before that helped solidify my basic understanding of the concepts at hand. Most interesting to me, policy junkie that I am, is the closing essay in which Tyson writes about the plague of scientific ignorance sweeping the country. After almost brutally doing away with that Bible-in-textbook-clothing anachronism that is "intelligent design," he makes great points about America's waning prestige in scientific research and the future costs, both economic and academic, that we will have to pay due to ceding our intellectual priority to advance knowledge. I'm not much interested in sustaining American supremacy in any field, but I can always get behind an argument for strengthening education.

What I most enjoyed was the excitement that Tyson has for his field. He doesn't get bogged down in the minutiae of atomic weights and the like, but thrills at the possibilities of quantum mechanics and takes an almost excessive amount of joy in ruminating over the possible ways that people can be killed in space from the atom-splitting nullification of crossing a black hole's event horizon to the persistent fear of a species-leveling asteroid striking Earth. Tyson is a man possessed of a childlike sense of wonder at the mysteries of the universe that sees the current limits of our scientific understanding not as having reached the final frontiers of science but as hurdles to be vaulted over in our quest to know. His enthusiasm is quite contagious and I challenge any reader to

emerge from this book without being excited about science.

## Chris

I have often lamented the passing of my favorite popular scientist, Carl Sagan, by talking about how necessary he is right now. We are at a point in our history where scientific illiteracy is growing, where people are not only ignorant of how science works, but are

of their ignorance. What we need is someone who can reach the majority of Americans who are not especially scientifically literate - the people whose automatic reaction to science is to think, "That's just too hard for me to deal

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Enter Neil deGrasse Tyson, an astrophysicist and the director of the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. He's appeared on countless television programs, including

and

, to talk about the current state of astronomy and astrophysics. He's an engaging and entertaining man, who claims that Pluto was "asking for" its demotion, who seems to take perverse pleasure in describing all the terrible ways the universe could take us out. He knows that we're in a precarious position, here on Earth, and he revels in it rather than worrying about it.

Whereas Sagan seemed to come from the point of view that the universe was a place of infinite wonder, where one could look anywhere and be awed and humbled, Tyson's attitude is more of the

universe as an infinite theme park - a place where you could see your electrons stripped from your body, watch gas clouds larger than our own solar system collide and ignite, or see planets crumple under cosmic bombardment. Tyson's universe is an adventure, as big as it gets.

This book is a collection of essays that Tyson wrote for

magazine over a ten year period, on a variety of subjects related to science and scientific inquiry. In many ways, it's similar to every other pop science book out there - and there are so very many of them - but it is his perspective and his voice that makes this one stand out from the crowd.

## Jocelyn

I don't think I can properly explain how much I love this book, but I'll try.

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, a magazine dedicated to -- you guessed it -- natural history (basically, science) between 1995-2005.

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. Like, "Oh, Neil deGrasse Tyson, you." Also, he tries to explain complex terms or theories so that you can finish the book and be a pseudo-astrophysicist. Now you can go to dinner parties and impress people with your knowledge about quarks and black holes and radio waves.