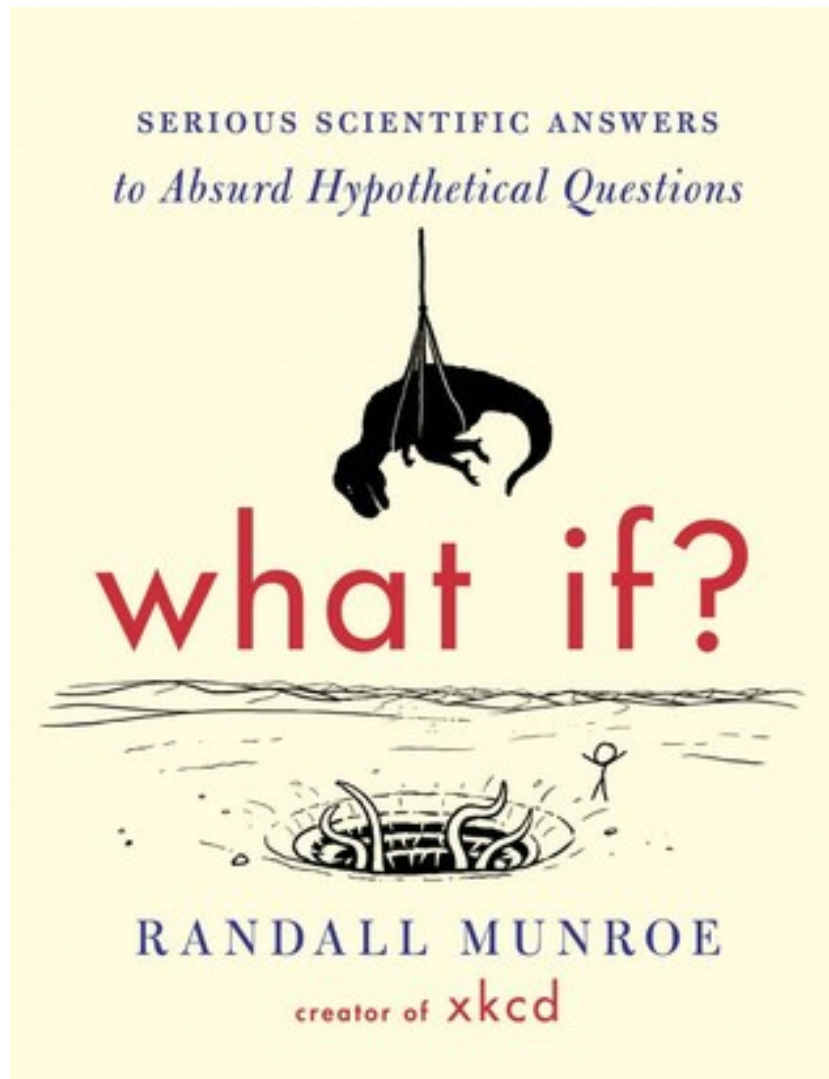


What If?: Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions Book PDF Download



By:
Randall Munroe

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Patrick

I've been a reader of XKCD for ages. Not just a reader, a fan. A big goey, geeky fan.

So much of a fan that when I heard about this book, I went so far as to abuse my power as an author to get an Advance Reading Copy of the book, so that I could enjoy its deliciousness sooner. And... y'know... taunt people on the internet.

And it worked. I got an early copy. And I treasured it. I petted it. It was precious to me. Precious.

Then life got in the way. Conventions. Promotion for my own book launch.

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And it worked. I got an early copy. And I treasured it. I petted it. It was precious to me. Precious.

Then life got in the way. Conventions. Promotion for my own book launch. I had dad stuff to do. I had prep work for the yearly

Then I had my book tour....

Through all of this, I carried my precious ARC around, waiting for the time when I'd be able to spare the brainpower to read it. I even took it on tour with me. (Honestly, this book has more frequent flier miles than any three of you put together.)

Manny

A: Actually, less than you'd think.

First, a little background about this book. If you're a geek, it's unputdownable, a word that, if you think carefully, means "cannot be put down". (You may not be aware of this fact, since the word is nearly always misused). So the geek who receives it is going to carry on reading through breakfast, through lunch, while he's supposed to be working, and on through dinner,

A: Actually, less than you'd think.

First, a little background about this book. If you're a geek, it's unputdownable, a word that, if you think carefully, means "cannot be put down". (You may not be aware of this fact, since the word is nearly always misused). So the geek who receives it is going to carry on reading through breakfast, through lunch, while he's supposed to be working, and on through dinner, ignoring the non-geek guests who have come to visit. He'll interrupt conversations every now and then to ask things like "Could you build a bridge across the Atlantic out of Lego bricks?" or "How close would you need to be to a supernova to be killed by the neutrino flux?". He'll finish just as the last guest leaves.

There is a common myth, most likely spread by geeks, that what they do is somehow pretty important to Western civilization. If you're easily impressed by this kind of propaganda, you might expect that markets will crash as geek traders neglect their buy signals, nuclear experiments will explode as geek scientists look away from their control panels, and terrorists will strike with impunity as geek intelligence analysts fail to turn up for work. All that sounds pretty bad.

But let's stop and consider for a moment. Is any of the above geek behavior novel or unpredictable? Hardly. Geeks are always doing this kind of thing, and society has learned to work around them.

Important as they may be

, there's always some dependable non-geek person ready to step in just in case the geek in question has stayed up all night playing Halo or watching a Star Wars marathon. The non-geek will cover for them until the geek has got over their fifteen hour internet speed-chess session and is ready to do whatever it is they're actually being paid to do.

So delivering a copy of

to every geek in the world will only really have two important effects. It will make a great many geeks very happy, and (assuming of course that the copies are paid for) it will turn Randall Munroe into a billionaire.

And who could possibly have anything against that?

Felicia

AMAZING BOOK! I love love love it and frankly, there's no better book to read on the toilet. Off the toilet too, but I learned so much and the writing is so engaging and entertaining and just MARVELOUS. Of course in the style of xkcd, this and Atlas Obscura would be my go-to book gifts this year.

Valerie

My evil plan of reading this book in small doses aloud to my students during math class has worked. Several of them have bought their own copies, and they are, I believe, planning to use their math skills for good, and not for world domination.