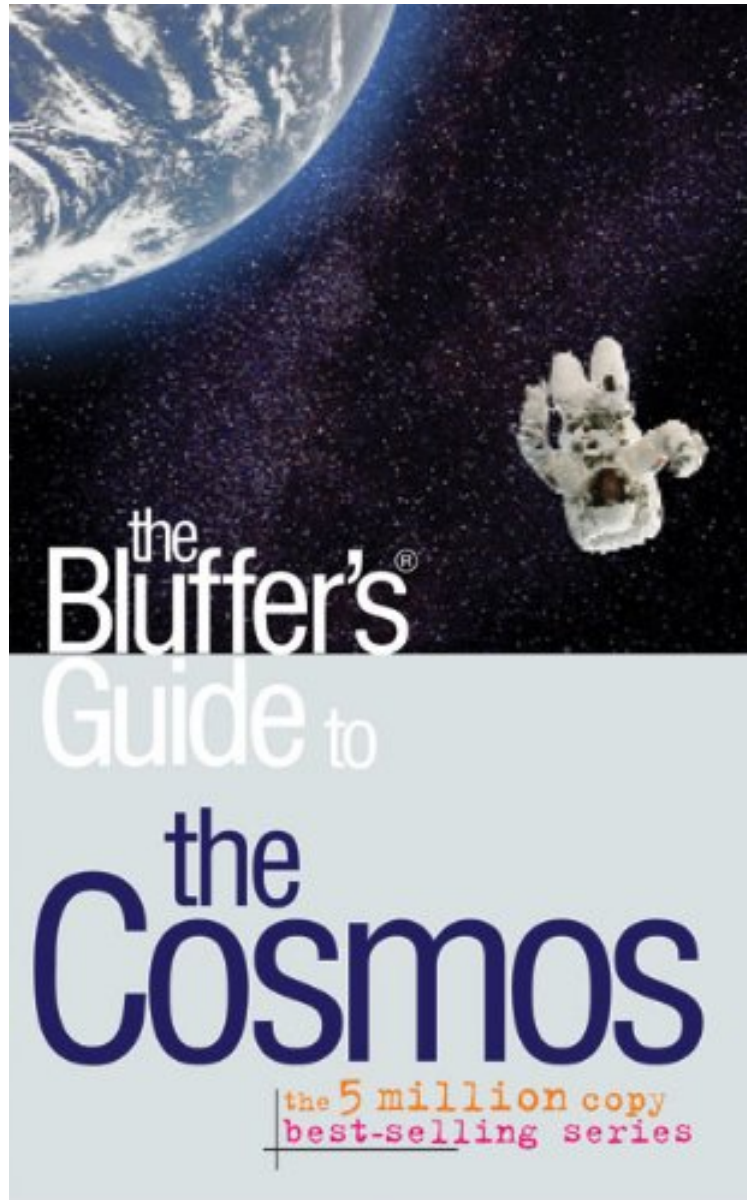


(Ebook free) The Bluffer's Guide to the Cosmos (Bluffer's Guides)

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Daniel Hudon

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#4347178 in Books 2009-02-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.00 x .30 x 4.251, .0 #File Name: 190309642192 pages | File size: 79.Mb

Daniel Hudon : The Bluffer's Guide to the Cosmos (Bluffer's Guides) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bluffer's Guide to the Cosmos (Bluffer's Guides):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Makes it fun for kids or grown-ups needing a quick overview By John L Murphy If you found the Smartest Guy in the Pub and he turned out not to be Stephen Hawking, he might

sound like the author of this spirited 85-page whirlwind tour of where--and within which--we live. In a couple of hours, with or without drinks, perhaps the Guy's ramblings would sound like these here: witty, fact-laden, trivia studded, and full of pretty good jokes, given what appears a Bluffer's Guide style sheet that insists on about as many attempts at snark and humor per paragraph as The Onion or a sit-com script. Daniel Hudon, a Canadian science writer, even gets a couple of World Cup remarks in, and his love of both astronomy and knowledge on a less elevated plane makes these pages fly by, full of interest. Even the little glossary manages to pack a pun or chortle into each definition, no small feat. I now know why Sirius is called the Dog Star, how Polaris looks as if the skies revolve around it, and that blue stars are hotter than red or white. I must take Dr. Hudon's word for it that there's a galaxy named "You Should See the Other Guy" (M65). While I did not find always the "why" answered (as in if what it means if we live in a beige-hued universe, or if our Sun is a star and stars suns, what then?), the spark here helped sum up a few concepts that my long-ago classes failed to make stick. For example, how single-celled organisms produced oxygen to jumpstart life on earth, how the Moon stabilized Earth's orbit and helped it nurture life, and how life may have come via space junk falling from above billions of years ago all fit, even if spread across the pages, to bring the cosmos down to earth, so to speak. There's far more on the solar system than I'd expected, and much less on the Big Bang, Big Crunch, or Big Bounce (my favorite of the three) but in a tiny book able to fit into your pocket for quick consultation to win a pub quiz or campfire bet, this compression's understandable. What I liked was its lack of mathematics. I wanted to study the stars as a child but my arithmetical limitations convinced me I could not; so, any reminder that I can, despite my cognitive dissonance, is welcome. I liked this quick tour, and commend its concision, for as any good read, it inspires you (even if no titles are suggested) to follow-up the subject with a stack of longer and alas less chatty looks at what surrounds us all. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Astronomy is fun and essential By bronstad This is a nice little book, a fairly quick read, and does exactly what it sets out to do: make you knowledgeable enough to have a conversation about astronomy. It's a nice little journey too, sprinkled with humor. Hudon describes complicated issues so clearly that a youngster could understand them, but adults not familiar with quasars, dark matter, or whose knowledge of the solar system, or the cosmos, is a little shaky will have a good time reading about them.

Size doesn't matter When it comes to the size of the cosmos, just remember that it's not size but how you bluff it that matters. True bluffers won't bother about the size of the Solar System. It's too small. Things are always colliding with each other. Size does matter While Galileo got by with a lens the size of a mandarin orange, today's astronomers scour the heavens using mirrors that range from the size of an average swimming pool to a new class of telescopes destined to exceed tennis court size—one of which is sited in Chile and aptly named the Very Large Telescope (VLT). Cosmologists are happiest when stating the obvious. Another one in prospect is of football-field proportions, and known as the Overwhelmingly Large Telescope (OWL for short). Measure for measure The Hubble trouble that sabotaged the \$1.5 billion space telescope project was an error of 1.3 mm (.05 inches), and it required a space mission to fix it. More recently, instructions using imperial instead of metric measurement sent a Mars probe into oblivion. Condensed milk All the stars seen in the night sky are in Earth's home galaxy, which got its name, Via Lactea, from the Romans who, lacking imagination, simply borrowed the name from a Greek myth involving the breast of a goddess spurting milk across the sky.