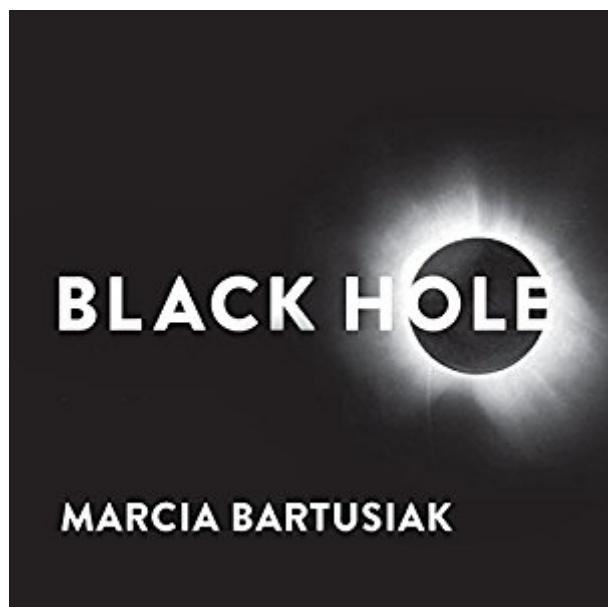


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# Black Hole: How An Idea Abandoned By Newtonians, Hated By Einstein, And Gambled On By Hawking Became Loved



## Synopsis

For more than half a century, physicists and astronomers engaged in heated dispute over the possibility of black holes in the universe. The weirdly alien notion of a space-time abyss from which nothing escapes - not even light - seemed to confound all logic. This engrossing audiobook tells the story of the fierce black-hole debates and the contributions of Einstein, Hawking, and other leading thinkers who completely altered our view of the universe. Renowned science writer Marcia Bartusiak shows how the black hole helped revive Einstein's greatest achievement, the general theory of relativity, after decades during which it had been pushed into the shadows. Not until astronomers discovered such surprising new phenomena as neutron stars and black holes did the once-sedate universe transform into an Einsteinian cosmos, filled with sources of titanic energy that can be understood only in the light of relativity. Celebrating the 100th anniversary of general relativity, *Black Hole* uncovers how the black hole really got its name and recounts the scientists' frustrating, exhilarating, and at times humorous battles over the acceptance of one of history's most dazzling ideas.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am a Geophysicist/Astrophysicist and have followed Black Hole research for most of my life. Marcia's explanation was so clear and coherent that anybody can understand what the phenomenon of a Black Hole is. I learned very much from this book.

Like most of Marcia Bartusiak's books on Astronomy etc. this work is very well written and a

pleasure to read. I give it only four stars, however, since it doesn't treat the most interesting part of the story, namely the recent period after the discovery that black holes really and truly exist. Here the work of Stephen Hawking and the subsequent presentation of various different models of what black holes might actually do, for example the current controversy over whether they have "fire walls" around them, is central. Maybe she is saving that material for a sequel?? I hope so!!

Fascinating look at the history of the theoretical understanding and astronomical identification of "black holes". For readers who don't know what a black hole is, the book defines this without the mathematical theory that may make it difficult to understand for some readers. In fact, there is NO mathematical requirements to understand this book. The book does an excellent of describing Newton's laws, special relativity and general relativity (Einstein), and some of the follow up concepts, e.g. Schwarzschild singularity (won't get into defining this and other concepts in this book - read the book!), and Oppenheimer's unusual finding. And, the description is very readable and understandable. This is an excellent book for anyone with just a casual interest in the concept of a black hole and the theories and discoveries clearly identifying that these exist.

Marcia Bartusiak is an excellent science writer and this book is no exception. She traces the history of Black Holes from John Michell, Robert Oppenheimer, John Mitchel (Princeton) who coined the phrase Black Hole through Stephen Hawking and Hawking Radiation. Along the way Bartusiak discusses the ideas of the main characters in the history of Black Holes such as Albert Einstein, Schwarzschild, and Chandrasekhar. Basic concepts such as electron and neutron degeneracy are well explained. The book is written on a level for almost anyone. SCS

The author not only has a masterful command of the subject-matter, she writes in a wonderfully captivating and entertaining way, stringing a story of momentous scientific advance with beads of individual scientists, their aspirations, their foibles. At times very funny, it is a joy to read. I am not scientifically or mathematically adept (to put it mildly), and really had the illusion, while reading the story, that I understood something of the subject matter. I shall never look at the sky as I did before.

I bought this book as a gift for my 92 year-old mother who has a love affair with the Hubble Telescope. She is fascinated by Black Holes and space in general. She loves the stories about the pioneers in space study and can follow most of the scientific descriptions even though she doesn't have a strong academic background. I compared this to a lot of other books and chose this one

specifically because it seems to be written with the average person in mind.

A beautifully written and engaging book. It takes you down the path of not only what happened, but also who did it and why it happened. We too often think of the scientists as just the still, black and white pictures in text books and forget that they were people with personalities. Some very stern, others pranksters, but all brilliant and struggling to find the answers that we, sometimes, take for granted as being self evident and no need to take a closer look. Plato and Aristotle were "right" until Galileo and Newton showed that they weren't completely right. Newton was "right" until Einstein showed Newton wasn't completely right. Who will come along and show that Einstein wasn't completely right, or Hawking, or any of the other scientists of today?

I generally reserve 5 stars for books that will survive for years. I have no doubt that this one will live a long and fruitful life. The author's research and writing are a joy. I am not close to being well-versed in physics, but I was able to understand and enjoy the trip to black holes--their history and what is known today. The author's presentation of what is a difficult subject is truly a delight.

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