

a short history of nearly everything summary

A Short History of Nearly Everything Summary: A Journey Through Time and Discovery

Author: Bill Bryson, a renowned travel writer and author known for his engaging and accessible style. His background in science, though not a formal scientific qualification, lends a unique perspective to his exploration of scientific concepts. His meticulous research and ability to translate complex information into captivating narratives are crucial to the success of "A Short History of Nearly Everything."

Publisher: Doubleday, a well-established publisher with a strong history of publishing non-fiction works of high scientific and literary merit, making them a suitable publisher for a book aiming for a broad audience interested in a "short history of nearly everything summary."

Editor: While the specific editor's name isn't publicly available, the editorial team at Doubleday undoubtedly played a critical role in shaping the manuscript, ensuring accuracy and readability. Their expertise in editing scientific and popular science writing would be vital in translating Bryson's ambitious project into a coherent and engaging narrative.

This article delves into a "short history of nearly everything summary," providing a detailed look at Bill Bryson's monumental work and its enduring impact. Bryson's book isn't a dry recitation of facts; it's a captivating journey through the history of scientific discovery, told with wit, humility, and a deep appreciation for the human endeavor to understand our universe.

From the Big Bang to the Human Genome: A Short History of Nearly Everything Summary

"A short history of nearly everything summary" reveals itself as a compelling narrative, not merely a chronological listing of scientific achievements. Bryson masterfully weaves together the stories of countless scientists, their breakthroughs, and the often-messy process of scientific advancement. He highlights the interconnectedness of various fields, showing how seemingly disparate discoveries influence each other.

For instance, the book's exploration of plate tectonics isn't just about geology; it reveals its crucial role in understanding the distribution of life on Earth, influencing evolutionary biology and even human history. A

"short history of nearly everything summary" wouldn't be complete without mentioning Bryson's personal anecdotes. He embeds himself within the narrative, relating his own experiences trying to grasp the complex concepts, making the book relatable and accessible to a wide readership. This self-deprecating humor and honest struggle make the complex scientific concepts surprisingly approachable.

I remember clearly the section on quantum physics in "A short history of nearly everything summary." Initially, I found it daunting, a labyrinth of paradoxical ideas. However, Bryson's storytelling ability, coupled with his candid admission of his own struggles to comprehend the material, made the process far less intimidating. Instead of feeling overwhelmed, I felt encouraged to persevere, to grapple with the concepts, even if only partially.

The book also excels at highlighting the human element within scientific discovery. Bryson doesn't present science as a detached, objective pursuit but rather as a deeply human endeavor, fraught with rivalries, errors, and eureka moments. The story of the discovery of DNA, for example, in a "short history of nearly everything summary," isn't simply a recitation of facts; it's a dramatic narrative of competing scientists, personal ambitions, and serendipitous breakthroughs.

Case Study: The Discovery of the Structure of DNA

A perfect example within a "short history of nearly everything summary" is Bryson's account of the discovery of DNA's double helix structure. He doesn't just describe Watson and Crick's achievement but delves into the contributions of Rosalind Franklin, whose X-ray diffraction images were crucial to their success. He highlights the ethical complexities and controversies surrounding her largely overlooked contribution, underscoring the human side of scientific progress. This case study perfectly encapsulates the depth of Bryson's approach. He brings the science to life by humanizing it, highlighting both the triumphs and the shortcomings inherent in the scientific process.

Main Themes and Takeaways from A Short History of Nearly Everything Summary

A "short history of nearly everything summary" ultimately underscores the vastness and interconnectedness of the natural world. The book's central theme is the awe-inspiring scale of scientific discovery and its profound impact on our understanding of the universe and our place within it. Key takeaways from a "short history of nearly everything summary" include:

The interconnectedness of scientific disciplines: Bryson masterfully demonstrates how different scientific fields—physics, chemistry, biology, geology, etc.—are intricately intertwined.

The human element of science: Science isn't a purely objective endeavor; it's driven by human curiosity, ambition, and fallibility.

The ongoing nature of scientific discovery: Our understanding of the universe is constantly evolving, with new discoveries constantly refining and expanding our knowledge.

The importance of scientific literacy: Bryson implicitly argues for the importance of scientific literacy for every citizen, highlighting the profound impact science has on our lives.

Conclusion

Bill Bryson's "A Short History of Nearly Everything" is more than just a popular science book; it's an engaging narrative that makes complex scientific concepts accessible and relatable. A "short history of nearly everything summary" simply cannot capture the full depth and richness of this masterful work, which deserves to be read and experienced in its entirety. Its enduring popularity is a testament to Bryson's ability to transform scientific knowledge into a captivating and insightful journey of discovery. It leaves the reader with a profound appreciation for the vastness and complexity of the universe, and our ongoing quest to understand it.

FAQs

1. Is "A Short History of Nearly Everything" suitable for non-scientists? Absolutely. Bryson's accessible writing style makes it engaging and understandable for readers of all backgrounds.
1. How long does it take to read "A Short History of Nearly Everything"? Reading time varies, but expect to dedicate several weeks for a thorough read.
1. What are the book's major scientific themes? It covers cosmology, physics, chemistry, biology, geology, and much more.
1. Does the book focus on specific historical periods? It covers a broad historical span, from the Big Bang to the present day.

1. Is the book primarily descriptive or analytical? While descriptive, it offers insightful analysis of scientific breakthroughs and their societal impact.
1. What makes Bryson's writing style unique? His wit, humor, and self-deprecating honesty make complex scientific concepts approachable.
1. Are there any controversial aspects of the book? Some readers might find certain interpretations or omissions debatable, particularly regarding historical figures.
1. Are there any recommended companion resources? Searching for supplementary materials on specific topics mentioned within the book can enhance understanding.
1. Where can I purchase "A Short History of Nearly Everything"? It's widely available online and in bookstores globally.

Related Articles:

1. "A Short History of Nearly Everything: Cosmology and the Big Bang": Focuses specifically on Bryson's treatment of cosmology and the Big Bang theory, exploring its scientific basis and significance.
1. "Bryson's Approach to Scientific Storytelling": An analysis of Bryson's unique writing style and its effectiveness in communicating complex scientific concepts to a general audience.
1. "The Human Element in A Short History of Nearly Everything": Explores

Bryson's portrayal of the scientists, their rivalries, and the human side of scientific discovery.

1. "A Short History of Nearly Everything and the History of Science": Compares Bryson's account with traditional histories of science, highlighting similarities and differences.
1. "Critical Analysis of A Short History of Nearly Everything": A deeper dive into critical reviews and assessments of Bryson's work, examining its strengths and weaknesses.
1. "The Geological Aspects of A Short History of Nearly Everything": Examines Bryson's treatment of geology, including plate tectonics and the history of Earth.
1. "Biological Discoveries in A Short History of Nearly Everything": Focuses on Bryson's account of major biological discoveries, such as evolution and genetics.
1. "A Short History of Nearly Everything: Impact on Scientific Literacy": Discusses the book's role in promoting scientific literacy among the general public.
1. "Comparing Bryson's Work with Other Popular Science Books": Compares "A Short History of Nearly Everything" with similar works by authors like Stephen Hawking and Carl Sagan.

a short history of nearly everything summary: Mathematics Keith J. Devlin, 1999 A modern classic by an accomplished mathematician and best-selling author has been updated to encompass and explain the recent headline-making advances in the field in non-technical terms.

a short history of nearly everything summary: The Mother Tongue Bill Bryson, 2015-06-02 "Vastly informative and vastly entertaining...A scholarly and fascinating book." —Los Angeles Times

With dazzling wit and astonishing insight, Bill Bryson explores the remarkable history, eccentricities, resilience and sheer fun of the English language. From the first descent of the larynx into the throat (why you can talk but your dog can't), to the fine lost art of swearing, Bryson tells the fascinating, often uproarious story of an inadequate, second-rate tongue of peasants that developed into one of the world's largest growth industries.

a short history of nearly everything summary: The Lost Continent Bill Bryson, 1989 I come from Des Moines. Somebody had to. And, as soon as Bill Bryson was old enough, he left. Des Moines couldn't hold him, but it did lure him back. After ten years in England he returned to the land of his youth, and drove almost 14,000 miles in search of a mythical small town called Amalgam, the kind of smiling village where the movies from his youth were set. Instead he drove through a series of horrific burgs, which he renamed Smellville, Fartville, Coleslaw, Coma, and Doldrum. At best his search led him to Anywhere, USA, a lookalike strip of gas stations, motels and hamburger outlets populated by obese and slow-witted hicks with a partiality for synthetic fibres. He discovered a continent that was doubly lost: lost to itself because he found it blighted by greed, pollution, mobile homes and television; lost to him because he had become a foreigner in his own country.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *Notes from a Small Island* Bill Bryson, 2015 In 1995, before leaving his much-loved home in North Yorkshire to move back to the States for a few years with his family, Bill Bryson insisted on taking one last trip around Britain, a sort of valedictory tour of the green and kindly island that had so long been his home. His aim was to take stock of the nation's public face and private parts (as it were), and to analyse what precisely it was he loved so much about a country that had produced Marmite; a military hero whose dying wish was to be kissed by a fellow named Hardy; place names like Farleigh Wallop, Titsey and Shellow Bowells; people who said 'Mustn't grumble', and 'Ooh lovely' at the sight of a cup of tea and a plate of biscuits; and Gardeners' Question Time. *Notes from a Small Island* was a huge number-one bestseller when it was first published, and has become the nation's most loved book about Britain, going on to sell over two million copies.

a short history of nearly everything summary: The Body Bill Bryson, 2021-01-26 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • Bill Bryson, bestselling author of *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, takes us on a head-to-toe tour of the marvel that is the human body—with a new afterword for this edition. Bill Bryson once again proves himself to be an incomparable companion as he guides us through the human body—how it functions, its remarkable ability to heal itself, and (unfortunately) the ways it can fail. Full of extraordinary facts (your body made a million red blood cells since you started reading this) and irresistible Brysonesque anecdotes, *The Body* will lead you to a deeper understanding of the miracle that is life in general and you in particular. As Bill Bryson writes, “We pass our existence within this wobble of flesh and yet take it almost entirely for granted.” *The Body* will cure that indifference with generous doses of wondrous, compulsively readable facts and information. As addictive as it is comprehensive, this is Bryson at his very best, a must-read owner's manual for every body.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *A Walk in the Woods* Bill Bryson, 2015 In the company of his friend Stephen Katz (last seen in the bestselling *Neither Here nor There*), Bill Bryson set off to hike the Appalachian Trail, the longest continuous footpath in the world. Ahead lay almost 2,200 miles of remote mountain wilderness filled with bears, moose, bobcats, rattlesnakes, poisonous plants, disease-bearing ticks, the occasional chuckling murderer and - perhaps most alarming of all - people whose favourite pastime is discussing the relative merits of the external-frame backpack. Facing savage weather, merciless insects, unreliable maps and a fickle companion whose profoundest wish was to go to a motel and watch *The X-Files*, Bryson gamely struggled through the wilderness to achieve a lifetime's ambition - not to die outdoors.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *A Short History of Nearly Everything* Bill Bryson, 2016-06-16 Bill Bryson describes himself as a reluctant traveller, but even when he stays safely at home he can't contain his curiosity about the world around him. *A Short History of Nearly Everything* is his quest to understand everything that has happened from the Big Bang to the rise of

civilization - how we got from there, being nothing at all, to here, being us. Bill Bryson's challenge is to take subjects that normally bore the pants off most of us, like geology, chemistry and particle physics, and see if there isn't some way to render them comprehensible to people who have never thought they could be interested in science. The ultimate eye-opening journey through time and space, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* is the biggest-selling popular science book of the 21st century, and reveals the world in a way most of us have never seen it before.

a short history of nearly everything summary: The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid Bill Bryson, 2007 Bill Bryson's first travel book opened with the immortal line, "I come from Des Moines. Somebody had to." In this deeply funny and personal memoir, he travels back in time to explore the ordinary kid he once was, in the curious world of 1950s Middle America. It was a happy time, when almost everything was good for you, including DDT, cigarettes and nuclear fallout. This is a book about one boy's growing up. But in Bryson's hands, it becomes everyone's story, one that will speak volumes especially to anyone who has ever been young.

a short history of nearly everything summary: The Lessons of History Will Durant, Ariel Durant, 2012-08-21 A concise survey of the culture and civilization of mankind, *The Lessons of History* is the result of a lifetime of research from Pulitzer Prize-winning historians Will and Ariel Durant. With their accessible compendium of philosophy and social progress, the Durants take us on a journey through history, exploring the possibilities and limitations of humanity over time. Juxtaposing the great lives, ideas, and accomplishments with cycles of war and conquest, the Durants reveal the towering themes of history and give meaning to our own.

a short history of nearly everything summary: A Really Short History of Nearly Everything Bill Bryson, 2020-10-29 The extraordinary Bill Bryson takes us from the Big Bang to the dawn of science in this book about basically everything. Ever wondered how we got from nothing to something? Or thought about how we can weigh the earth? Or wanted to reach the edge of the universe? Uncover the mysteries of time, space and life on earth in this extraordinary book - a journey from the centre of the planet to the dawn of the dinosaurs, and everything in between. And discover our own incredible journey, from single cell to civilisation, including the brilliant (and sometimes very bizarre) scientists who helped us find out the how and why. Adapted from *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, the ground-breaking bestseller, this book is stunningly illustrated throughout, and accessible for all ages

***** Reviews for *A Short History of Nearly Everything*: 'It's the sort of book I would have devoured as a teenager. It might well turn unsuspecting young readers into scientists.' *Evening Standard* 'I doubt that a better book for the layman about the findings of modern science has been written' *Sunday Telegraph* 'A thoroughly enjoyable, as well as educational, experience. Nobody who reads it will ever look at the world around them in the same way again' *Daily Express* 'The very book I have been looking for most of my life' *Daily Mail*

a short history of nearly everything summary: A Short History of the World H.G. Wells, 2015-03-06 From his perspective in 1922, H.G. Wells wrote a *Short History of the World*. This straightforward look at the world's timeline, from the first appearance of humans to the reconstruction after World War I is an engaging and concise adventure story that also happens to be true. Xist Publishing is a digital-first publisher. Xist Publishing creates books for the touchscreen generation and is dedicated to helping everyone develop a lifetime love of reading, no matter what form it takes.

a short history of nearly everything summary: A Little History of the World E. H. Gombrich, 2014-10-01 E. H. Gombrich's *Little History of the World*, though written in 1935, has become one of the treasures of historical writing since its first publication in English in 2005. The Yale edition alone has now sold over half a million copies, and the book is available worldwide in almost thirty languages. Gombrich was of course the best-known art historian of his time, and his text suggests illustrations on every page. This illustrated edition of the *Little History* brings together

the pellucid humanity of his narrative with the images that may well have been in his mind's eye as he wrote the book. The two hundred illustrations—most of them in full color—are not simple embellishments, though they are beautiful. They emerge from the text, enrich the author's intention, and deepen the pleasure of reading this remarkable work. For this edition the text is reset in a spacious format, flowing around illustrations that range from paintings to line drawings, emblems, motifs, and symbols. The book incorporates freshly drawn maps, a revised preface, and a new index. Blending high-grade design, fine paper, and classic binding, this is both a sumptuous gift book and an enhanced edition of a timeless account of human history.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *Free* Chris Anderson, 2009-07-07 The online economy offers challenges to traditional businesses as well as incredible opportunities. Chris Anderson makes the compelling case that in many instances businesses can succeed best by giving away more than they charge for. Known as Freemium, this combination of free and paid is emerging as one of the most powerful digital business models. In *Free*, Chris Anderson explores this radical idea for the new global economy and demonstrates how it can be harnessed for the benefit of consumers and businesses alike. In the twenty-first century, *Free* is more than just a promotional gimmick: It's a business strategy that is essential to a company's successful future.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *Shakespeare* Bill Bryson, 2016-04-26 Bill Bryson's bestselling biography of William Shakespeare takes the reader on an enthralling tour through Elizabethan England and the eccentricities of Shakespearean scholarship—updated with a new introduction by the author to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. William Shakespeare, the most celebrated poet in the English language, left behind nearly a million words of text, but his biography has long been a thicket of wild supposition arranged around scant facts. With a steady hand and his trademark wit, Bill Bryson sorts through this colorful muddle to reveal the man himself. His Shakespeare is like no one else's—the beneficiary of Bryson's genial nature, his engaging skepticism, and a gift for storytelling unrivaled in our time.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *One Summer* David Baldacci, 2011-06-14 David Baldacci delivers a moving, family drama about learning to love again after terrible heartbreak and loss in this classic New York Times bestseller—soon to be a Hallmark original movie. It's almost Christmas, but there is no joy in the house of terminally ill Jack and his family. With only a short time left to live, he spends his last days preparing to say goodbye to his devoted wife, Lizzie, and their three children. Then, unthinkable, tragedy strikes again: Lizzie is killed in a car accident. With no one able to care for them, the children are separated from each other and sent to live with family members around the country. Just when all seems lost, Jack begins to recover in a miraculous turn of events. He rises from what should have been his deathbed, determined to bring his fractured family back together. Struggling to rebuild their lives after Lizzie's death, he reunites everyone at Lizzie's childhood home on the oceanfront in South Carolina. And there, over one unforgettable summer, Jack will begin to learn to love again, and he and his children will learn how to become a family once more.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *Beethoven's Anvil* William Benzon, 2002 ¿7F Why does the brain create music? This text argues that the key to music's function lies in the very complexity of musical experience. As well as being both personal and social, the creation of music taps into the whole spectrum of human skills, both physical and mental.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived* Adam Rutherford, 2016-09-08 'A brilliant, authoritative, surprising, captivating introduction to human genetics. You'll be spellbound' Brian Cox This is a story about you. It is the history of who you are and how you came to be. It is unique to you, as it is to each of the 100 billion modern humans who have ever drawn breath. But it is also our collective story, because in every one of our genomes we each carry the history of our species - births, deaths, disease, war, famine, migration and a lot of sex. In this captivating journey through the expanding landscape of genetics, Adam Rutherford reveals what our genes now tell us about human history, and what history can now tell us about our genes. From Neanderthals to murder, from redheads to race, dead kings to plague, evolution to

epigenetics, this is a demystifying and illuminating new portrait of who we are and how we came to be. *** 'A thoroughly entertaining history of Homo sapiens and its DNA in a manner that displays popular science writing at its best' Observer 'Magisterial, informative and delightful' Peter Frankopan 'An extraordinary adventure...From the Neanderthals to the Vikings, from the Queen of Sheba to Richard III, Rutherford goes in search of our ancestors, tracing the genetic clues deep into the past' Alice Roberts

a short history of nearly everything summary: A Short History of Women Kate Walbert, 2009-06-16 Inspired by a suffragist ancestor who starved herself to promote the integration of Cambridge University, Evie refuses to marry and Dorothy defies a ban on photographing the bodies of her dead Iraq War soldier sons, a choice that embarrasses Dorothy's daughters.

a short history of nearly everything summary: Made in America Bill Bryson, 1996-03-01 Bill Bryson, who gave glorious voice to The Mother Tongue, now celebrates her magnificent offspring in the book that reveals once and for all how a dusty western hamlet with neither woods nor holly came to be known as Hollywood...and exactly why Mr. Yankee Doodle call his befeathered cap Macaroni.

a short history of nearly everything summary: The Complete Notes Bill Bryson, 2000 After nearly two decades in Britain, Bill Bryson took the decision to move Mrs Bryson, little Jimmy et al. back to the States for a while. But before leaving his much-loved Yorkshire, Bryson insisted on taking one last trip around old Blighty, a sort of valedictory tour of the green and kindly island that had for so long been his home. The resulting book, Notes from a Small Island, is a eulogy to the country that produced Marmite, George Formby, by-elections, milky tea, place names like Farleigh Wallop, Titsey and Shellow Bowells, Gardeners' Question Time and people who say, 'Mustn't grumble.' Britain will never seem the same again. Once ensconced back home in New Hampshire, Bryson couldn't resist the invitation to write a weekly dispatch for the Mail on Sunday's Night & Day magazine. Notes from a Big Country is a collection of eighteen months' worth of his popular columns about that strangest of phenomena - the American way of life. Whether discussing the dazzling efficiency of the garbage disposal unit, the exoticism of having your groceries bagged for you, or the mind-numbing frequency of commercial breaks on American TV, Bill Bryson brings his inimitable brand of bemused wit

a short history of nearly everything summary: Icons of England Bill Bryson, 2010-04-07 This celebration of the English countryside does not only focus on the rolling green landscapes and magnificent monuments that set England apart from the rest of the world. Many of the contributors bring their own special touch, presenting a refreshingly eclectic variety of personal icons, from pub signs to seaside piers, from cattle grids to canal boats, and from village cricket to nimbies. First published as a lavish colour coffee-table book, this new expanded paperback edition has double the original number of contributions from many celebrities including Bill Bryson, Michael Palin, Eric Clapton, Bryan Ferry, Sebastian Faulks, Kate Adie, Kevin Spacey, Gavin Pretor-Pinney, Richard Mabey, Simon Jenkins, John Sergeant, Benjamin Zephaniah, Joan Bakewell, Antony Beevor, Libby Purves, Jonathan Dimbleby, and many more: and a new preface by HRH Prince Charles.

a short history of nearly everything summary: One Summer Bill Bryson, 2013-09-26 In summer 1927, America had a booming stock market, a president who worked just four hours a day (and slept much of the rest), a devastating flood of the Mississippi, a sensational murder trial, and an unknown aviator named Charles Lindbergh who became the most famous man on earth. It was the summer that saw the birth of talking pictures, the invention of television, the peak of Al Capone's reign of terror, the horrifying bombing of a school in Michigan, the thrillingly improbable return to greatness of over-the-hill baseball player Babe Ruth, and an almost impossible amount more. In this hugely entertaining book, Bill Bryson spins a tale of brawling adventure, reckless optimism and delirious energy. With the trademark brio, wit and authority that make him Britain's favourite writer of narrative non-fiction, he brings to life a forgotten summer when America came of age, took centre stage, and changed the world.

a short history of nearly everything summary: At Home Bill Bryson, 2010-05-27 In At Home, Bill Bryson applies the same irrepressible curiosity, irresistible wit, stylish prose and

masterful storytelling that made *A Short History of Nearly Everything* one of the most lauded books of the last decade, and delivers one of the most entertaining and illuminating books ever written about the history of the way we live. Bill Bryson was struck one day by the thought that we devote a lot more time to studying the battles and wars of history than to considering what history really consists of: centuries of people quietly going about their daily business - eating, sleeping and merely endeavouring to get more comfortable. And that most of the key discoveries for humankind can be found in the very fabric of the houses in which we live. This inspired him to start a journey around his own house, an old rectory in Norfolk, wandering from room to room considering how the ordinary things in life came to be. Along the way he did a prodigious amount of research on the history of anything and everything, from architecture to electricity, from food preservation to epidemics, from the spice trade to the Eiffel Tower, from crinolines to toilets; and on the brilliant, creative and often eccentric minds behind them. And he discovered that, although there may seem to be nothing as unremarkable as our domestic lives, there is a huge amount of history, interest and excitement - and even a little danger - lurking in the corners of every home.

a short history of nearly everything summary: *Made in America* Bill Bryson, 2016-09-08
'Funny, wise, learned and compulsive' - GQ Bill Bryson turns away from travelling the highways and byways of middle America, so hilariously depicted in his bestselling *The Lost Continent*, *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* and *Notes from a Big Country*, for a fast, exhilarating ride along the Route 66 of American language and popular culture. In *Made in America*, Bryson tells the story of how American arose out of the English language, and along the way, de-mythologizes his native land - explaining how a dusty desert hamlet with neither woods nor holly became Hollywood, how the Wild West wasn't won, why Americans say 'lootenant' and 'Toosday', how they were eating junk food long before the word itself was cooked up - as well as exposing the true origins of the words G-string, blockbuster, poker and snafu. 'A tremendously sassy work, full of zip, pizzazz and all those other great American qualities' Will Self, *Independent on Sunday*

a short history of nearly everything summary: The Body Bill Bryson, 2019-10-03 #1
Bestseller in both hardback and paperback: SHORTLISTED FOR THE 2020 ROYAL SOCIETY INSIGHT INVESTMENT SCIENCE BOOK PRIZE _____ 'A directory of wonders.' - The Guardian 'Jaw-dropping.' - The Times 'Classic, wry, gleeful Bryson...an entertaining and absolutely fact-rammed book.' - The Sunday Times 'It is a feat of narrative skill to bake so many facts into an entertaining and nutritious book.' - The Daily Telegraph _____ 'We spend our whole lives in one body and yet most of us have practically no idea how it works and what goes on inside it. The idea of the book is simply to try to understand the extraordinary contraption that is us.' Bill Bryson sets off to explore the human body, how it functions and its remarkable ability to heal itself. Full of extraordinary facts and astonishing stories *The Body: A Guide for Occupants* is a brilliant, often very funny attempt to understand the miracle of our physical and neurological make up. A wonderful successor to *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, this new book is an instant classic. It will have you marvelling at the form you occupy, and celebrating the genius of your existence, time and time again. 'What I learned is that we are infinitely more complex and wondrous, and often more mysterious, than I had ever suspected. There really is no story more amazing than the story of us.' Bill Bryson

a short history of nearly everything summary: Neither Here, Nor There Bill Bryson, 2010-03-02 Bill Bryson's first travel book, *The Lost Continent*, was unanimously acclaimed as one of the funniest books in years. In *Neither Here nor There* he brings his unique brand of humour to bear on Europe as he shoulders his backpack, keeps a tight hold on his wallet, and journeys from Hammerfest, the northernmost town on the continent, to Istanbul on the cusp of Asia. Fluent in, oh, at least one language, he retraces his travels as a student twenty years before. Whether braving the homicidal motorists of Paris, being robbed by gypsies in Florence, attempting not to order tripe and eyeballs in a German restaurant or window-shopping in the sex shops of the Reeperbahn, Bryson takes in the sights, dissects the culture and illuminates each place and person with his hilariously caustic observations. He even goes to Liechtenstein.

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moves to chemistry. With its origins in the enigmatic studies of alchemy, chemistry evolved along its own strange path. Bryson tells one exemplifying story, in which an amateur alchemist became convinced he could distill gold from human urine. "The similarity of color," Bryson explains, "seems to have been a factor in his conclusion." In an attempt to prove his hypothesis, the man collected fifty buckets of human urine, which he kept in his cellar. After a few months, the man noted, the substance in the buckets began to glow or explode into flames when exposed to air. He had failed in distilling gold from urine, but he had succeeded in creating phosphorous. Buy a copy to keep reading!

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