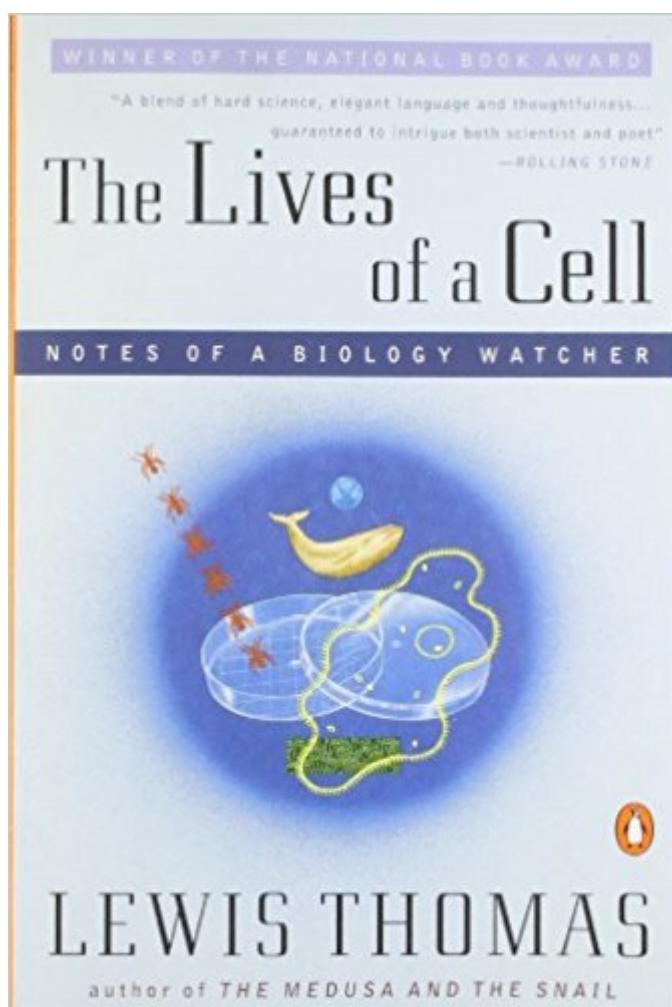


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Lives Of A Cell: Notes Of A Biology Watcher



Synopsis

Elegant, suggestive, and clarifying, Lewis Thomas's profoundly humane vision explores the world around us and examines the complex interdependence of all things. Extending beyond the usual limitations of biological science and into a vast and wondrous world of hidden relationships, this provocative book explores in personal, poetic essays to topics such as computers, germs, language, music, death, insects, and medicine. Lewis Thomas writes, "Once you have become permanently startled, as I am, by the realization that we are a social species, you tend to keep an eye out for the pieces of evidence that this is, by and large, good for us."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This 40-year-old book deals with issues that scientists are only now airing in public. The essays deal with topics as diverse as "Why don't you ever see dead birds?" and "If the mitochondria in my body's cells have different DNA than I have, what is our relationship?" In this book biology meets philosophy meets wonder. Even people who are not familiar with the technical terms will find provocative thoughts and observations to quickstart their own reflections.

Read it decades ago, it is even better now. Thomas foresees so much. One of the few thinkers who could see something like the Internet coming before we even had PCs. He is an elegant writer. The essay on Probability is a fine place to turn when one needs inspiration. I am giving copies of the paperback to friends.

I remember reading this book when I first began my undergraduate career in biochemistry (2008). As a current PhD student (2012), I look back on this book with fondness. It is written well and was an easy read for a young scientist. I actually had the chance to re-read this book earlier this year and surprisingly I was still intellectually stimulated by its content. Overall, the book is well written and would be appreciated by anybody who has at least a general interest in biology. I probably would recommend this to the average student who remembers bio class as "that tortuous hour three times a week" but I would suggest it to anyone interesting in or studying science.

I stumbled upon Lewis Thomas in a recent post on "Writer's Almanac". Curiosity got the best of me and I ended up ordering several of his books on . Thirty years of marriage to a scientist hasn't made that world any less mysterious and Thomas' writing looked like one more way to enter it. The language is unfamiliar and the concepts are complicated - at least to this layman - but I can't get enough of Thomas' marvelous writing. It's like science as poetry. Am I now well-versed in the secret life of the cell? Let's say I'm better versed than I was before I read the book. The best part is that I want to read more. Thomas' writing opens a door and invites you in. The beauty of it is that once you get there, you want to stay.

This boxed set contains two must-have books by Lewis Thomas--The Medusa and the Snail and Lives of a Cell. Thomas writes beautifully about biology and the natural universe. I see him as a combination biologist, natural philosopher and brilliant essayist. And don't worry, you don't need to know a lot about biology to enjoy these books. And if you do know a lot, you may enjoy them even more. This set is a perfect gift for both high school students just starting in biology as well as more advanced college students.

A woman in my Book Club chose Lives of A Cell for us to read. Initially I was intimidated by the scientific terms in the writings however after reading one essay I was completely hooked! The author writes beautifully, has a tremendous sense of humor and his points are valid and worth further discussion and exploration. I plan to hang on to this little volume so I can read it again from time to time and continue to ponder.

This may sound trite but our cells are really a part of us and they are miraculous. They function 24/7 without our being aware of them and, for the most part, without a high failure rate. Thomas indicates that there are many cell types that seem to have become internalized in our bodies that seem to

have the characteristics of bacteria. Remarkable are the mitochondria that are not us but have their own DNA and are encapsulated though they provide cells with energy from the food we eat. Thomas doesn't talk down to the average reader but does introduce many scientific terms to stimulate our thumbing through our dictionaries.

Great condition.

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