

The Simple Beauty of the Unexpected: A Natural Philosopher's Quest for Trout and the Meaning of Everything


By Marcelo Gleiser

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The Simple Beauty of the Unexpected: A Natural Philosopher's Quest for Trout and the Meaning of Everything By Marcelo Gleiser

Marcelo Gleiser has had a passion for science and fishing since he was a boy growing up on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro. Now a world-famous theoretical physicist with hundreds of scientific articles and several books of popular science to his credit, he felt it was time to connect with nature in less theoretical ways. After seeing a fly-fishing class on the Dartmouth College green, he decided to learn to fly-fish, a hobby, he says, that teaches humility. In *The Simple Beauty of the Unexpected*, Gleiser travels the world to scientific conferences, fishing wherever he goes. At each stop, he ponders how in the myriad ways physics informs the act of fishing; how, in its turn, fishing serves as a lens into nature's inner workings; and how science engages with questions of meaning and spirituality, inspiring a sense of mystery and awe of the not yet known. Personal and engaging, *The Simple Beauty of the Unexpected* is a scientist's tribute to nature, an affirmation of humanity's deep connection with and debt to Earth, and an exploration of the meaning of existence, from atom to trout to cosmos.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Beautifully composed . . . This elegant treatise will inspire readers who relish a philosophical approach to science and travel." —*Library Journal*

"Altogether excellent." —*Brain Pickings*

Review

"The fly-fishing is naively beautiful. The physics is just beautiful. But the conclusion to the journey of a man so engaged by both?the epiphany?is magnificent and should be shared by us all." (Jeremy Lucas, European Open fly-fishing champion, author of Presentation Fly-Fishing and The Last Salmon)

"The Simple Beauty of the Unexpected is an elegantly written, introspective, and thought-provoking meditation on growing up as someone curious about the universe. It's a wonderful introduction to the human side of science and the scientific side of being human." (Sean Carroll, author of The Big Picture: On the Origins of Life, Meaning, and the Universe Itself)

"Whether teasing apart the known, the unknown, and the unknowable in science, or immersing us in the natural world of Brazil or Iceland, Marcelo Gleiser's words sing on the page. You don't have to fish or seek out spiritual experiences to love this book (I do neither). I was absolutely delighted with Marcelo's joy in nature, with his reasons for not eating meat, and with the wonderful surprise for all animal lovers at the end of this compelling and highly personal narrative." (Barbara King, author of How Animals Grieve)

"With wit, charm, humor, and passion, Gleiser pulls off that rarest of catches?connecting the most fundamental and sublime aspects of science with the most intimate and ordinary experience of fishing. From a river in Iceland to the Large Hadron Collider near Geneva, Gleiser seamlessly pulls together disparate themes of life and questions of meaning. Full of warmth and deep insight, The Simple Beauty of the Unexpected is a meditation on human significance in a vast Universe that is full of both fish and stars." (Adam Frank, professor of astrophysics, University of Rochester, and NPR commentator)

About the Author

MARCELO GLEISER is the Appleton Professor of Natural Philosophy and a professor of physics and astronomy at Dartmouth College. He is a fellow of the American Physical Society and a recipient of the Presidential Faculty Fellows Award from the White House and National Science Foundation. He is the author of several books of popular science, including A Tear at the Edge of Creation, The Dancing Universe, and The Island of Knowledge. Gleiser is the cofounder of and a regular contributor to the NPR science blog 13.7 Cosmos and Culture.

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