



# Genius: The Life and Science of Richard Feynman

By James Gleick

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**Genius: The Life and Science of Richard Feynman** By James Gleick

**An illuminating portrayal of Richard Feynman—a giant of twentieth century physics—from his childhood tinkering with radios, to his vital work on the Manhattan Project and beyond**

Raised in Depression-era Rockaway Beach, physicist Richard Feynman was irreverent, eccentric, and childishly enthusiastic—a new kind of scientist in a field that was in its infancy. His quick mastery of quantum mechanics earned him a place at Los Alamos working on the Manhattan Project under J. Robert Oppenheimer, where the giddy young man held his own among the nation's greatest minds. There, Feynman turned theory into practice, culminating in the Trinity test, on July 16, 1945, when the Atomic Age was born. He was only twenty-seven. And he was just getting started.

In this sweeping biography, James Gleick captures the forceful personality of a great man, integrating Feynman's work and life in a way that is accessible to laymen and fascinating for the scientists who follow in his footsteps.

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## **Genius: The Life and Science of Richard Feynman By James Gleick Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

If you've read any of Richard Feynman's wonderful autobiographies you may think that a *biography* of Feynman would be a waste of your time. Wrong! Gleick's *Genius* is a masterpiece of scientific biography--and an inspiration to anyone in pursuit of their own fulfillment as a person of genius. Deservedly nominated for a National Book Award, underservedly passed over by the committee in the face of tough competition, and very deservedly a book that you must read.

### From Publishers Weekly

It would be hard to tell personal stories about the late Nobel physicist Feynman (1918-1988) better than the subject himself did in *What Do You Care What Other People Think?* To his credit, Gleick does not try. Rather, he depicts Feynman's "curious character" in its real context: the science he helped develop during physics' most revolutionary era. Fans of Feynman's own bestseller, "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!," won't be disappointed by his colleagues' recollections of his reckless obsession with doing science (a grad-school dorm neighbor once opened Feynman's door to find him rolling on the floor as he worked on a problem); but the anecdotes punctuate an expanded account of Feynman the visceral working scientist, not Feynman the iconoclast. This biography wants to measure both the particle and the wave of 20th-century genius--Feynman's, Julian Schwinger's, Murray Gell-Mann's, and others'--in the quantum era. Gleick seems to have enjoyed the cooperation of Feynman's family plus that of a good many of his colleagues from the Manhattan Project and the Challenger inquiry (in which Feynman played a scene-stealing role), and he steadily levies just enough of the burden of Feynman's genius on the reader so that the physicist remains, in the end, a person and not an icon of science. A genius could not hope for better. Gleick is the author of *Chaos: The Making of A New Science*.

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### From Library Journal

When Nobel laureate Feynman died in 1988, the world lost one of the most creative, idiosyncratic, and important minds of the 20th century. From "Feynman Diagrams" to the Manhattan Project to the Challenger investigation, Feynman left his mark on everything and every life that he touched. Gleick, author of *Chaos* (LJ 8/87), does a masterful job of capturing Feynman as both a scientist and as a mind at work: No better primer on Feynman's accomplishments will be written. Gleick is clear without condescension, accurate without being fussy, and thorough without being pedantic. As regards the personal minutiae of Feynman's life, this book is somewhat less comprehensive: Feynman's checkered history of personal relationships, for example, is not treated in the same exhaustive manner as his professional relationships. Feynman's personality, though, comes through in every word of this marvelous book. Although, astonishingly, Gleick never even met Feynman, he has written one of the most touching, affecting, and important works of scientific biography to have been produced in the last 30 years, a fine book that deserves a place in every collection. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 6/1/92; see also Feynman's personal narratives coauthored with Ralph Leighton, "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman," LJ 3/15/85, and "What Do You Care What Other People Think?," LJ 11/15/88, as well as Leighton's *Tuva or Bust! Richard Feynman's Last Journey*, LJ 3/1/91.--Ed.

- Mark L. Shelton, Athens, Ohio

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