

Albert einstein book review

Science



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Albert Einstein remains one of the 20th Century's most enigmatic yet popular figures. His high-minded concepts are more than most adults can handle, yet his popularity seems to rise with each passing year. His continuing importance to the world of physics is staggering given the recent advancements in the world of quantum physics. Yet Einstein the man is a much a different person than Einstein the scientist. It is Einstein the man that we see here, in this wonderful book by Maree Ferguson Delano.

Delano, who also wrote *The Photobiography of Thomas Alva Edison*, returns to the photobiography format here as well, and it's a good thing because Einstein is difficult enough to digest as it is. Photo after photo shows Einstein as a definitely human scientist, one who cared deeply for his family and who wanted desperately to have a "real" job. Einstein lived in Germany during the rise of the Nazis. The threat to his safety is very real, and it is partly because of the horrors that he sees growing up that he helps the Allies on the road to building the atomic bomb.

He once wrote "Organized power can be opposed only by organized power. Much as I regret this, there is no other way." The author does an excellent job of capturing the essence of the scientist and his momentous discoveries. (But the reader won't be able to get a complete picture of Einstein without a little further reading on his achievements. Delano tries mightily to distill the brilliance of Einstein into younger-reader-friendly terms, but it is a daunting task that escapes even the most brilliant of writers. His genius cannot be denied, however, and the author does a good job of displaying it for all to see. Einstein's theories of relativity and spacetime are amazing, especially considering that he was a terrible student, one whom one of his teachers

predicted " would never amount to anything. " That he conceived these monumental ideas with nothing more than pencil and paper and his own imagination is breathtakingly amazing. One theme that emerges from this discussion of Einstein's life is how much he liked children. He felt that he never really grew up.

He preferred the simple lives of children, who, in good times, didn't have to worry about many things that their parents did, like food, clothing, and shelter. In his later years, he received thousands of letters every year. Many of those letters were from children, and he took great pleasure in responding to them. In doing so, as he did throughout his life, he didn't talk down to children or force them to be adults to understand what he was saying. Rather, he became a child again, thinking in their terms and enjoying their lives, which were simpler than adults'.

The photos, provided as always by the excellent library of the National Geographic, are excellent in illustrating the life of a man who needs no introduction. The requisite timeline at the back of the book is a help as well, allowing the reader to put into perspective the events of Einstein's life. The Afterword is especially helpful, taking a look at how Einstein dominates public life even today, exactly 100 years after he announced his first theory of relativity. This book is recommended for older readers or for youngsters who have a basic understanding of physics.

Some of the concepts are high-minded, and they have to be; this is not a bad thing. The author deals with the subject matter as ably as possible. The human story of Einstein—as father, husband, devoted son, friend to children—shines through as well and can be understood by readers of all ages.

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Adults, too, will get a more rounded picture of the great scientist by reading this book, which, like its subject, doesn't talk down to anybody, instead putting its complex subject matter into terms that can be understood.