

# Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman! (Adventures of a Curious Character)

*By Richard P. Feynman, Ralph Leighton*

**A *New York Times* bestseller?the outrageous exploits of one of this century's greatest scientific minds and a legendary American original.**

Richard Feynman, winner of the Nobel Prize in physics, thrived on outrageous adventures. Here he recounts in his inimitable voice his experience trading ideas on atomic physics with Einstein and Bohr and ideas on gambling with Nick the Greek; cracking the uncrackable safes guarding the most deeply held nuclear secrets; accompanying a ballet on his bongo drums; painting a naked female toreador. In short, here is Feynman's life in all its eccentric?a combustible mixture of high intelligence, unlimited curiosity, and raging chutzpah.

Black-and-white photographs throughout

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## Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman! (Adventures of a Curious Character) Summary Details

Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman! (Adventures of a Curious Character) by By Richard P. Feynman, Ralph Leighton ebook read online.

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editorial:

Amazon.com Review

A series of anecdotes shouldn't by rights add up to an autobiography, but that's just one of the many pieces of received wisdom that Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman (1918-88) cheerfully ignores in his engagingly eccentric book, a bestseller ever since its initial publication in 1985. Fiercely independent (read the chapter entitled "Judging Books by Their Covers"), intolerant of stupidity even when it comes packaged as high intellectualism (check out "Is Electricity Fire?"), unafraid to offend (see "You Just Ask Them?"), Feynman informs by entertaining. It's possible to enjoy *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman* simply as a bunch of hilarious yarns with the smart-alecky author as know-it-all hero. At some point, however, attentive readers realize that underneath all the merriment simmers a running commentary on what constitutes authentic knowledge: learning by understanding, not by rote; refusal to give up on seemingly insoluble problems; and total disrespect for fancy ideas that have no grounding in the real world. Feynman himself had all these qualities in spades, and they come through with vigor and verve in his no-bull prose. No wonder his students--and readers around the world--adored him. --Wendy Smith

From Publishers Weekly

History will remember Nobel Prize-winning physicist Feynman (1918-1988), for his work in quantum physics and his role in the investigation of the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle. Contemporary readers and listeners, however, will remember him best for his reputation as a free-thinking iconoclast whose personal adventures were hilarious, insightful and inspiring. Todd does a fabulous job of conveying Feynman's infectious enthusiasm and childlike sense of wonder with his energetic portrayal of the scientist. He's adept even in difficult sections, such as when Feynman "speaks Italian" and "Chinese"—inventing completely made-up but accurate sounding languages. Todd does a good job of portraying Feynman's inquisitive manner and conveys the book's message and attitude with aplomb. While he sounds nothing like the late physicist (Feynman—the subject of James Gleick's *Genius*—had a thick Long Island accent and sounded more like a cross between Yogi Berra and *The Honeymooners'* Ed Norton), Todd's clean, polite voice is a revelation. *Based on the Norton paperback. (Oct.)*

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From Library Journal

Raymond Todd gives an extraordinary performance bringing to evanescent life the amusing adventures of this Nobel prize-winning physicist. Feynman was the quintessential inquirer whose investigations led him, at times, to sophisticated equations, at other times to a kind of social mischief that is delightful in its purity and inspiring in its intellectual courage. Based upon an impromptu talk during drum-playing sessions with his friend Ralph Leighton, this surprise best seller is packed with unforgettable anecdotes. Working at Los Alamos, Feynman cracked safes containing the secrets of the bomb. He challenged an abacus salesman to an arithmetical duel. He trained himself to sniff like a bloodhound. He played frigdeira in a Brazilian samba band. In Las Vegas, he learned the ways of gamblers and show girls. He gave his first physics lecture in front of Einstein. Refreshingly honest, iconoclastic, thought-provoking, this one-of-a-kind classic is a must for every collection. ?Peter Josyph, New York

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