What Mad Pursuit: A Personal View of Scientific Discovery

Francis Crick
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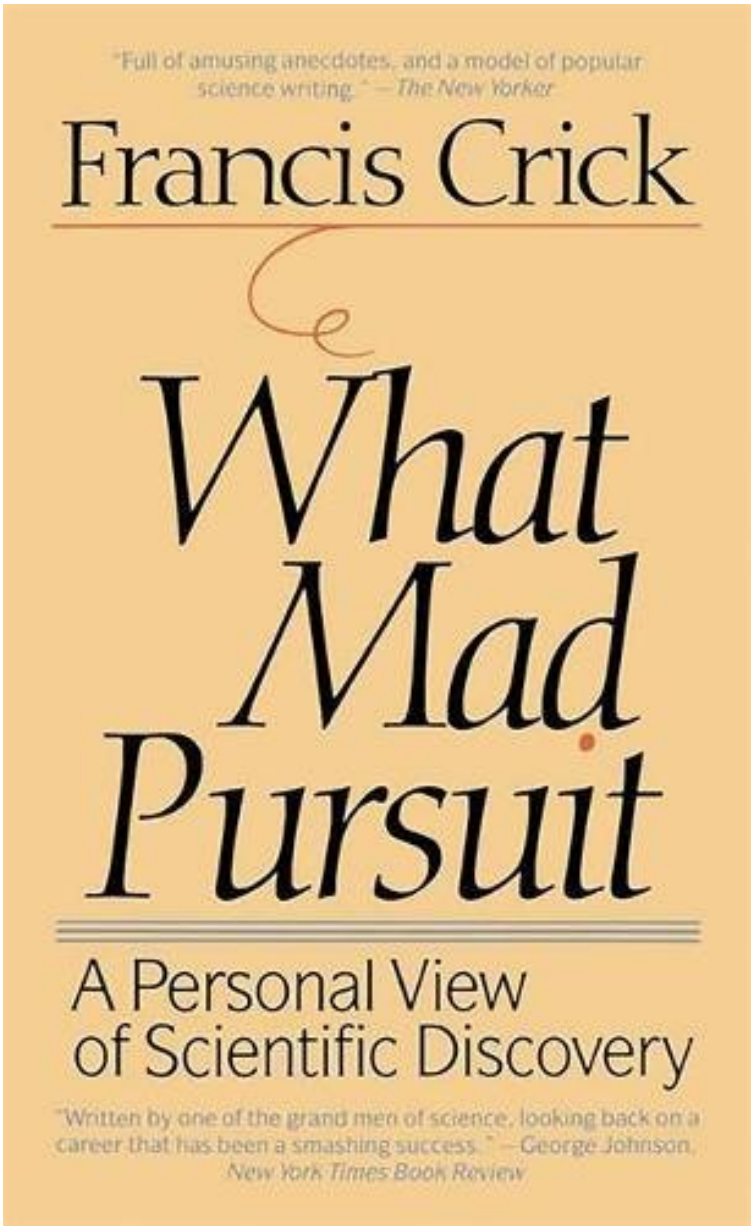

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Francis Crick : What Mad Pursuit: A Personal View of Scientific Discovery before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Mad Pursuit: A Personal View of Scientific Discovery:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Intense and witty accountBy Roberto Rigolin Ferreira LopesThis

Crick guy found a cute molecule that happens to be at the very core of all life forms. What an exciting pursuit! Here, he shares the whole adventure + a bit of himself. Such an intense and witty person even testing the peer-review process using a reference to Leonardo Da Vinci (personal communication). You will find many fun anecdotes + details of the reasoning behind the discovery.8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Do yourself a favor, pick up What Mad PursuitBy technophobicIn choosing popular science books, I use a couple of ground rules;- First Rule: Never pick books written by journalists or other professional writers without scientific training and practical experience. At best, their work is "on the job training." You are always left wondering whether their assertions are maybe off-the-wall. Their understanding of the subject matter is not deep enough to see the counterpoints.- Second Rule: For professional writers WITH scientific training experience but without being in the class of Einstein or Feynman (limiting myself to 20th century examples), pick their first book, probably the one that made them famous and opened the gates to more writing. A good example here is Douglas Hofstadter, whose Gdel, Escher, Bach was terrific. The trouble with the professional writers cum solid scientists is that their later works tend to become repetitive or steer us in directions where their qualifications are lacking.- Third Rule: For scientists of the top shelf, pick any of their popular writings, although you may want to start with their most personal book.The above is a long way to explain how I got to What Mad Pursuit, by Francis Crick. Crick was of the Einstein/Feynman class. What Mad Pursuit is a slender, popular volume, putatively about Crick's pursuits in molecular biology and the discoveries (with James Watson) of the DNA structure the genetic code, but actually about Crick's personal experiences with scientific discoveries. Descriptions of the work on the DNA structure and the genetic code illustrate the way discoveries come about. Factors such as partnership (Watson), collaboration, competition, priority and recognition are all covered - and without a single trace of self-absorption, an Englishman the way you like to think about them.A touching part of the book is the Epilogue - here you are, one of a handful of the greatest scientists of the 20th century, but what do you do with the rest of your life (in Crick's case 40 years) after the discoveries that brought you fame? What do you do for a second act? Without saying so directly, Crick appeared to have understood that second acts (a la Einstein or Bardeen) are near impossible. Reading the Epilogue, he appeared to be at peace with it.Do yourself a favor and pick up What Mad Pursuit.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This book is very good in it's technical contentBy jw wrightDr Crick is a puzzlement. This book is very good in it's technical content, but he strays in chap 3 and 13, seeking to find some resolution between Devine Design and his biology expertise.He wants to prove his creative thoughts are his.His later years in chap 14.His later book in 1994, says much the same with a lighter tone, IMO.Still all have a world of information.

Candid, provocative, and disarming, this is the widely-praised memoir of the co-discoverer of the double helix of DNA.

From Publishers WeeklyCrick's co-discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA (for which he shared a Nobel Prize with James Watson and Maurice Wilkins) was a maddening pursuit beset with false ideas, sloppy models, inconclusive results and fiascos. This will not come as news to readers of Watson's 1968 bestseller The Double Helix. Part memoir, part scientific primer, Crick's gracefully written reminiscence is more concerned with elucidating the intuitive leaps, feats of intellectual courage and perceptual skills that underlie the act of scientific discovery. Writing about his own career with uncommon modesty, he describes his current research into human consciousness and neuroanatomy; brain science of the 1980s, he concludes, is much like molecular biology of the '30s: the major questions remain largely unanswered. One wishes Crick were less reticent about his personal life. His occasional technical forays here into natural selection, the deciphering of the genetic code and theories of perception illuminate how science works. Illustrations. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.From School Library JournalYA Crick and Jim Watson received the 1962 Nobel Prize for their discovery of the double helix structure of the DNA molecule. Here, Crick details his early training as a physicist; explains how he came to be at Cambridge studying X-ray crystallography; and shows his great respect for other scientists such as Linus Pauling, Sir Lawrence Bragg, Max Perutz, and Sidney Brenner. The writing is clear and straightforward, even when the renderings become technical. The appendixes elaborate further on the detailed biochemistry of the subject. Crick relates both the problems and the successes that he and Watson incurred in their "mad pursuit" of the mysteries within the DNA molecule. He concludes this volume with a discussion of his work at the Salk Institute in California. A shorter version of Crick's life and work appears in Lewis Wolpert and Alison Richards' Passion for Science (Oxford, 1988), but the longer version will be of interest to more persistent students.Robyn Cook Schuster, Episcopal High School, Bellaire, Tex.Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc.From the PublisherThe man who is widely acknowledged to be the best biologist since Darwin, the co-discoverer of DNA, tells his side of the story in this widely-praised memoir. Sloan Foundation Science Series.