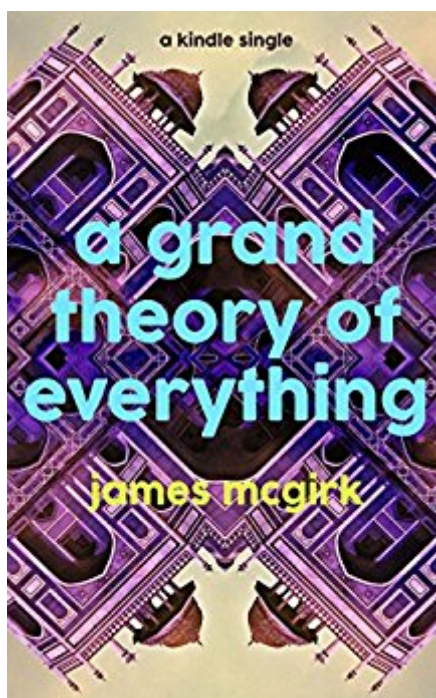


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A Grand Theory Of Everything (Kindle Single)



Synopsis

What do you do if you're a teenager, stranded by your parents in New Delhi, without any sort of adult supervision, with easy access to all sorts of strange drugs? If you're James McGirk, you use your bad trip to develop a philosophy that explains the whole world and all of its complexities. In *A Grand Theory of Everything*, McGirk takes us from the winding backstreets of New Delhi to his cramped apartment in New York City, and then on to his eventual relocation with his wife to the empty plains of Oklahoma. And, most importantly, he takes us inside his own head, where his weird theories take shape to help him understand his alienation from his family, his struggles to find a career, his wife's failing health, and all of life's hardships. James McGirk was born in London and grew up in Madrid and New Delhi. He's fascinated with technology, fine art, and globalization. A former geopolitical analyst and computer game writer, these days you'll find McGirk filing stories about Oklahoma and teaching writing at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK. He has an MFA and a BA in Writing from Columbia University. Cover design by Evan Twohy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

James McGirk is a new writer (I guess) with lots of experience in teaching how to write good. This book gave me a personal kick for writing my own "grand theory of everything". Even if his main purpose wasn't to energize (like in the Energizer battery ads) lazy people like myself to write their own kindle singles, this writer did it. This book is personal, well written, sincere, open and timely. As a bonus, the book includes detailed information about the OODA Loop, another person's (a fighter pilot named Boyd) grand theory for tactical events, later adopted by the air force and the secret services of the world. Lovely personal bonus: The same Mondo 2000 issue mentioned in this book was my price possession about the same time as the author had it, and it gave me a similar boost for experiencing stuff. :) Many thanks. I wish McGirk writes more kindle singles like this one.

Uniquely spectacular.

intellectual. confessional. stark. Occasionally baffling. Teenage angst in the Delhi bazaar morphs into something unexpected. Will reread it.

Not very inspiring. Hard to follow his logic at times.

Interesting but not a must.

Author James McGirk is many things, but boring is not one of them. As an expat American teenager living in India, he developed his theory that everything is like an onion. As he put it, "Intricately layered layers that lie on top of an infinitesimal nugget of nothing." Life was profoundly meaningless, like an onion, layered but ultimately wrapped around nothing. And that was his grand theory of everything. But he soon discovered there was one big problem with the onion theory: you can't do anything with it. Eventually, McGirk became a disciple of John Boyd, developer of the OODA loop, a decision-making cycle of observe, orient, decide, and act. In simple terms, the OODA loop is all about accepting a chaotic environment and adapting to it. Adopting the OODA loop as a way of life, however, McGirk learned that it wasn't the answer to everything. From dropping acid (LSD) in New Delhi to developing screenplays in New York, the author has had a most interesting life. A Grand Theory of Everything is one of the most engaging personal stories that I've read in a long time. I borrowed the book for free with my Kindle Unlimited subscription.

This is less a book about an over-arching theory of the cosmos than a journey of self-discovery about a "Third Culture Kid," an American teen who found himself dragged to New Delhi by his journalist parents. Powerful and evocatively written, McGirk conjures up a strange and yet entirely credible vision of New Delhi that you won't find in the India guide books. McGirk navigates through an urban chaos of back alley medical shops, Sufi shrines and butcher shops, all in search of some kind of meaning to life. Perish the notion that you'll be reading about beatific Indian gurus, this is far grittier and ultimately, a far more truthful account of India in the 1990s, on the cusp of plugging into globalism. There are many strong and beautifully crafted passages here, and the prose flows fluidly from the vivid mayhem of India to McGirk's own inner quest for meaning and identity. Impressive!

My friend, forgive me, I believe a novel lies in these words. I would begin a book that is told slowly, one that does not summarize events too quickly but seduces the reader to experience as is in certain places in the book. Such amazing interesting experiences, give them the time they deserve. As for the onion, certainly we all go through our existential phase in our twenties. I too lived many places, with crappy parents who were from many places, and have been atheist for most of my life. I understand what is to be in a cultural wasteland. The thing is, America is too a cultural paradox. The American is a myth. There is a crazy book in new age that is about a multidimensional being named Seth, called Seth Speaks. Mostly I think the books are a scam, but much said in them "ring" true. One phrase being, you are not a sack of cosmic bones. I also recommend reading near death experiences from online databases. It is an enlightening read. The thing is, one cannot go through existence happy thinking there is no point and if you go through existence miserable, then definitely no point exists. Even if you have to create meaning, it must be done for your own sake. I am fairly confident, about 85 percent, that there is indeed meaning and purpose even if we don't know what that is. The onion is an excellent metaphor but I see it as layers of lives that unfold to reveal what will be our spiritual enlightenment. Happy writing!

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