

For Immediate Release

VP/Publicity Director

LOSING THE NOBEL PRIZE:

A Story of Cosmology, Ambition, and the Perils of Science's Highest Honor

by Brian Keating

“Brian Keating's riveting new book tells the inside story of the search for cosmic origins, emphasizing the influence of Nobel dreams and laying bare the question of whether the lure of grand prizes is ultimately a good thing for science.”

—Brian Greene, author of *The Elegant Universe*

“A fascinating autobiographical account, full of intriguing detail, of the passions and inspirations that underlie the scientific quest to comprehend the nature and origins of our universe...A highly thoughtful and informative book.”

—Sir Roger Penrose, Emeritus Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics, University of Oxford and author of *The Emperor's New Mind*

In 1895 Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, sat at a desk in Paris and secretly wrote out his last will and testament. In that document, the man known to many as “the Merchant of Death” stipulated that his vast wealth be distributed in the form of yearly prizes to those who “have conferred the greatest benefit to mankind.” In the ensuing years, the Nobel Prize would become the world’s most prestigious honor. Each December, thousands of the world’s elites now descend on Stockholm to dine on reindeer with the King of Sweden and celebrate the achievements of humankind.

Yet, as physicist Brian Keating so eloquently explains in his incisive critique of the award, there’s something rotten in Sweden. **LOSING THE NOBEL PRIZE: *A Story of Cosmology, Ambition, and the Perils of Science's Highest Honor* [W. W. Norton & Company; April 24, 2018; \$27.95 hardcover]** is a shot across the bow from one of America’s most well-regarded scientists, and a plea to reform the award that has captivated generations—often at the expense of the disciplines the prize purportedly promotes.

In language at once lofty and conversational, Keating tells the story of how his own work on the BICEP experiments became a pursuit of the Nobel, an endeavor that encouraged him to turn away from the collaborative spirit that should be the hallmark of scientific inquiry.

LOSING THE NOBEL PRIZE weaves together three narratives—the intimate tale of a young man in love with the night sky, the breathtaking birth story of the cosmos, and the history of a prize that would prove a glittering and unobtainable chimera for him, as it has for countless

scientists over the past century. The result is a page-turning tale of ambition and heartbreak, as well as a devastating commentary on an award that has should represent humanity's highest ideals—but often comes at a great cost.

As Keating notes, despite its soaring goals, the Nobel Prize suffers “from systemic biases.” The prize notoriously discourages communal effort among scientists. In addition, the Nobel Committee has awarded Nazis and war criminals, and lauded “the therapeutic value of the lobotomy.” Only two women have been awarded the prize in physics, and no woman has won the physics award in over half a century. Despite these troubling missteps and oversights, Keating sees hope for the Nobel. In his final chapter, the California physicist outlines “suggestions for reforming humanity’s superlative award.”

LOSING THE NOBEL PRIZE has already garnered praise from some of the brightest stars in the scientific firmament. Stephon Alexander, Professor of Physics at Brown University and author of *The Jazz of Physics*, calls Keating a “visionary” and believes **LOSING THE NOBEL PRIZE** to be “one of the greatest stories told in cosmology.” Royal astronomer Martin J. Rees, author of *Universe*, calls the book “riveting,” while Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rae Armantrout praises Keating’s volume as “that rare thing among popular science books—a page-turner.” Sean Carroll, author of *The Big Picture*, calls the book “compulsively readable,” and Peter Diamandis, author of *Abundance* and *Bold*, says, “This is a personal, cautionary tale to which we should all listen.”

In **LOSING THE NOBEL PRIZE**, Brian Keating has managed a singular accomplishment; among these pages readers will find wisdom and adventure, deep questions and provocative answers, truths and riddles. The book is so much more than investigation into the merits of the world’s most coveted award. Here is an exploration of who we are as seekers, as thinkers, as people. And the lessons herein, if taken to heart, may prove more valuable than any gilded medallion.

About the Author

Brian Keating is a professor of physics at the University of California, San Diego; a Fellow of the American Physical Society; a commercially rated pilot; and the director of the Simons Observatory. He received the 2007 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers for his work on BICEP. He lives with his family in La Jolla, California.

TITLE: LOSING THE NOBEL PRIZE

ISBN: 978-1-324-00091-4

PUBLICATION DATE: April 24, 2018

PRICE: \$27.95

PAGE COUNT: 320 Pages