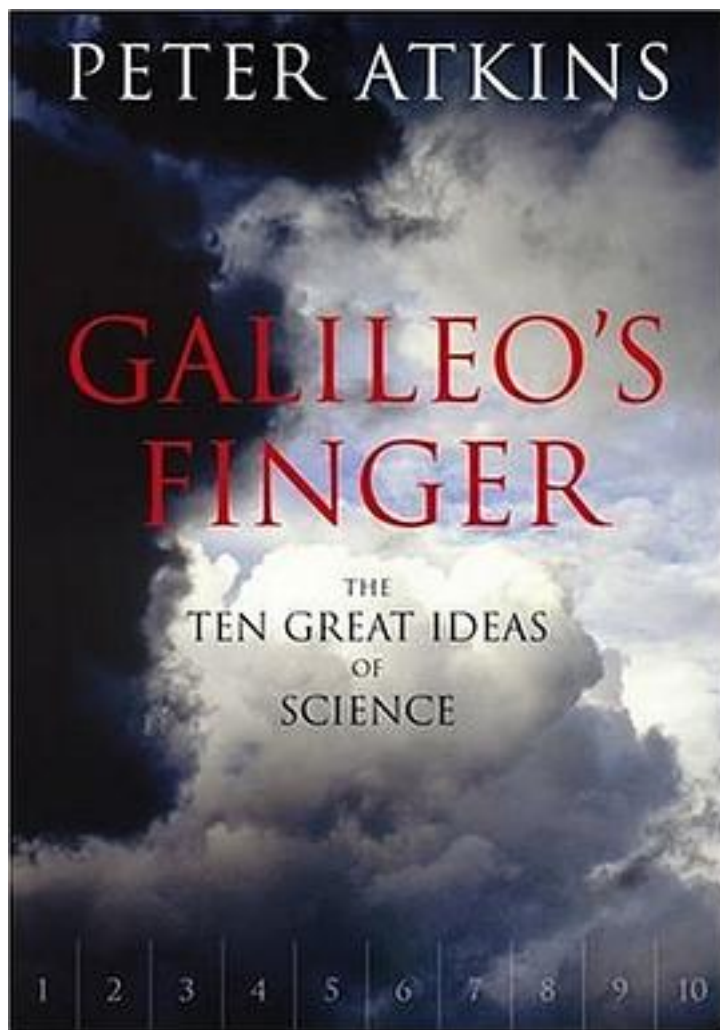


Galileo's Finger



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Why Galileo's finger? Galileo, one of whose fingers is preserved in a vessel displayed in

Florence, provided much of the impetus for modern science, pointing the way out of medieval ignorance. In this brilliant account of the central ideas of contemporary science, Peter Atkins celebrates the effectiveness of Galileo's symbolic finger for revealing the nature of our universe, our world, and ourselves. Galileo's Finger takes the reader on an extraordinary journey that embraces the ten central ideas of current science. 'By a great idea,' writes Peter Atkins, 'I mean a simple concept of great reach, an acorn of an idea that ramifies into a great oak tree of application, a spider of an idea that can spin a great web and draw in a feast of explanation and elucidation.' With wit, charm, and patience, Atkins leads the reader to an understanding of the essence of the whole of science, from evolution and the emergence of complexity, to entropy, the spring of all change in the universe; from energy, the universalization of accountancy, to symmetry, the quantification of beauty; and from cosmology, the globalization of reality, to spacetime, the arena of all action. 'My intention is for us to travel to the high ridges of science,' Atkins tells us. 'As the journey progresses and I lead you carefully to the summit of understanding, you will experience the deep joy of illumination that science alone provides.' Galileo's Finger breaks new ground in communicating science to the general reader. Here are the essential ideas of today's science, explained in magical prose.

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