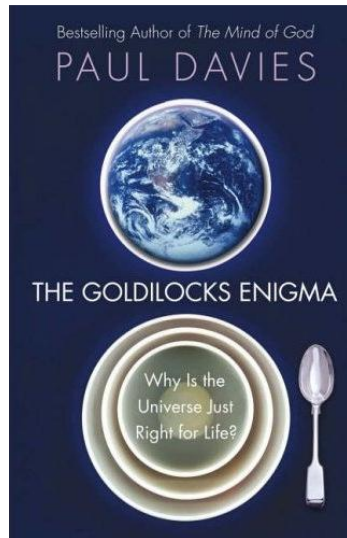


## BOOK REVIEW

**Davies, Paul.** *The Goldilocks Enigma: Why is the Universe Just Right for Life?*  
Allen Lane, London, 2006.



The introduction to the latest offering from this internationally acclaimed physicist declares: 'Paul Davies shows how many different aspects of the cosmos, from the properties of the humble carbon atom to the speed of light – even the laws of physics themselves – seemingly conspire to encourage the emergence of life, and hence observers.'

He describes the latest discoveries that are allowing scientists to piece together the story of the universe in unprecedented detail.

He explains why, despite spectacular progress, scientists are now more divided than ever on such fundamental questions as: What are the laws of physics and where do they come from? Is a theory of everything within our grasp? What is the universe made of and how did it begin? Is there just one universe or many? What happened before the big bang? Why is the universe so uncannily bio-friendly.'

This work is extensively researched, well argued and clearly presented. He names the various theories or explanations that he addresses in this book: the absurd universe; the unique universe; the multiverse; intelligent design; the life principle; the self-explaining universe; the fake universe. Davies' own inclinations are towards the life principle and the self-explaining universe. As a physicist, he applies a rational scientific methodology to his topic.

He rejects the argument for intelligent design, and makes 'no attempt to consider other modes of discovery, such as spiritual enlightenment or revelation through religious experience'. This methodology leads to a rejection of religion as an explanation for, or an answer to, the questions he poses. Approaching Davies' questions from a religious perspective may lead to somewhat different conclusions.

This is not a light 'bedtime' book. It requires a slow, focussed reading to appreciate Davies' arguments and attention to detail, but the reader who persists will be both greatly challenged and amply rewarded.