The Annotated and Illustrated Double Helix

James D. Watson Ph.D., Alexander Gann, Jan Witkowski Ph.D.
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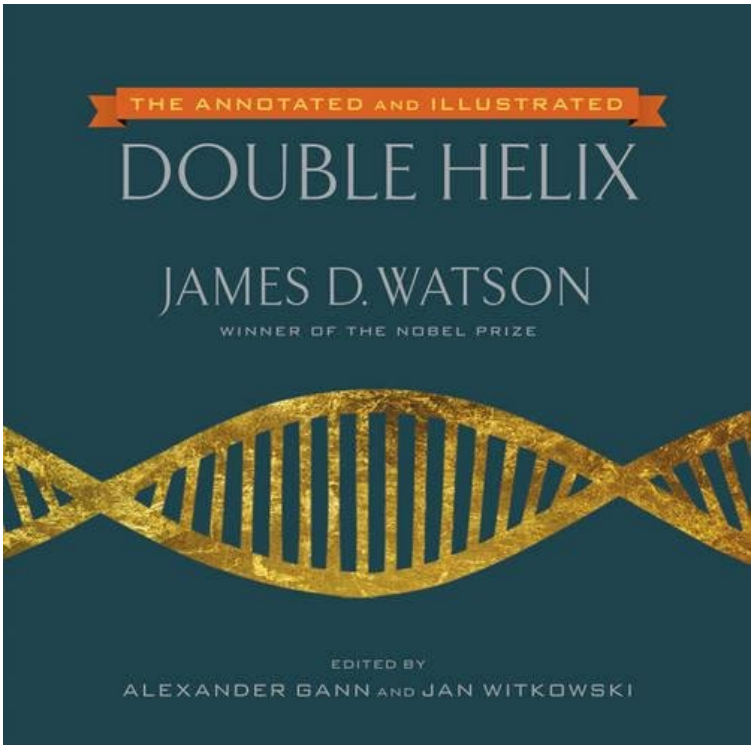

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James D. Watson Ph.D., Alexander Gann, Jan Witkowski Ph.D. : The Annotated and Illustrated Double Helix before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Annotated and Illustrated Double Helix:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful book about a time and a place and a group of people who happen to be scientists.By Rob VI first read The Double Helix in the 1970's and remembered that it read like a novel and that it started with a hike in the Alps. When I saw this annotated version I bought it immediately and read it again. The original text was as I remembered - lively, descriptive of a time and place (European academia in the 1950's) and also descriptive of how science is accomplished but without losing the reader in a haze of actual scientific complexity. Many people, then and now, have faulted Watson for his treatment of Rosalind Franklin in the book, but as sexist as his language rings in our ears now, if The Double Helix had been a novel, I doubt few would comment. For this is a book about people, whose motives and prejudices will never be as pure as we might wish - then it truly would be a boring book as others have found it in these reviews. And if you think the ethics and competitiveness are out of line in this book, try "And the Band Played On" by Randy Shilts about the HIV epidemic and the cutthroat scientists looking to take credit for the discovery of the virus. Nothing has changed. Because the characters (who just happen to be scientists) have egos and grant money and Nobel Prizes on the line.The annotations in this edition of The Double Helix are often revealing, and the appendices, including one on the difficulties in getting the book published initially due primarily to fear of libel suits from the many people potentially offended by Watson's descriptions, are

full-blooded and well worth reading on their own (with the exception of the exert from Watson's other book which discusses receiving his Nobel and his trip to Stockholm, the style of writing of which does not match that of The Double Helix).The last lines of the last chapter of the book are among my favorite closing lines of any book, fiction or non: "But now I was alone, looking at the long-haired girls near St. Germain de Prs and knowing they were not for me. I was twenty-five and too old to be unusual." Does this sound like a dull book on science? If you have a curious mind, read this book and make your own judgments.11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Even Better Than the OriginalBy Bradley BakerThe new edition is a larger and deeper experience of scientific discovery compared to the original. I read the original while in graduate school in the 90's. I really enjoyed the new edition's annotations by the editors. The letters and excerpts from notebooks greatly add to the intrigue and drama of this amazing story. For instance, the inclusion of letters to Rosalind Franklin and Linus Pauling's thoughts on nucleic acid structure from his notebook just add many more layers to a wonderful story.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Almost a novel on how science really worksBy J. PicThere are several aspects I like of this book:- it is a vivid account of a historically important scientific event that has eventually affected our lives. Unlike a book of history, this can be read almost as a novel, thus making it amenable for a broad public (no prior technical knowledge is required either).- it clearly shows how science works. How the personal biases introduced by culture, character, etc. clearly affect what you study, and how you study it. It is striking seen how Franklin and Wilkinson despising of abstract modelling impeded them to get the right answer, in spite of the clear experimental advantage they had.- finally, even if written by Watson, the figure of Crick is pervasive. Crick had an incredible capability for abstract thinking, and his figure is often shadowed by that of Watson.

On the fiftieth anniversary of Watson and Crick receiving the Nobel Prize, a freshly annotated and illustrated edition of The Double Helix provides new insights into a scientific revolution.Published to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Nobel Prize for Watson and Cricks discovery of the structure of DNA, an annotated and illustrated edition of this classic book gives new insights into the personal relationships between James Watson, Frances Crick, Maurice Wilkins, and Rosalind Franklin, and the making of a scientific revolution.

Robert K. Merton "The New York Times Book " A fascinating case history...Describes the events that led up to one of the great biological discoveries of our time.Jacob Bronowski "The Nation" No one could miss the excitement in this story of a great and beautiful discovery....The book communicates the spirit of science as no formal account has ever done....the sense of the future, the high spirits, and the rivalry and the guesses right and wrong, the surge of imagination and the test of fact.Andre Lwoff "Scientific American" The history of a scientific endeavor, a true detective story that leaves the reader breathless from beginning to end.Richard Feynman He has described admirably how it feels to have that frightening and beautiful experience of making a scientific discovery.Peter B. Medewar "The New York of Books" An enormous success...a classic.Philip Morrison "Life" Lively, wholly brash, full of sharp and sudden opinion, often at the edge of scandal.About the AuthorJames D. Watson, together with Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1962. He is Chancellor Emeritus of the Watson School of Biological Sciences at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.Alexander Gann (the Lita Annenberg Hazen Dean-Elect) is a member of the faculty of the Watson School of Biological Sciences.Jan Witkowski (Executive Director, Banbury Center) is a member of the faculty of the Watson School of Biological Sciences.