



A Planet of Viruses

By Carl Zimmer

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A Planet of Viruses By Carl Zimmer

Viruses are the smallest living things known to science, yet they hold the entire planet in their sway. We are most familiar with the viruses that give us colds or the flu, but viruses also cause a vast range of other diseases, including one disorder that makes people sprout branch-like growths as if they were trees. Viruses have been a part of our lives for so long, in fact, that *we* are actually part virus: the human genome contains more DNA from viruses than our own genes. Meanwhile, scientists are discovering viruses everywhere they look: in the soil, in the ocean, even in caves miles underground.

This fascinating book explores the hidden world of viruses—a world that we all inhabit. Here Carl Zimmer, popular science writer and author of *Discover* magazine's award-winning blog *The Loom*, presents the latest research on how viruses hold sway over our lives and our biosphere, how viruses helped give rise to the first life-forms, how viruses are producing new diseases, how we can harness viruses for our own ends, and how viruses will continue to control our fate for years to come. In this eye-opening tour of the frontiers of biology, where scientists are expanding our understanding of life as we know it, we learn that some treatments for the common cold do more harm than good; that the world's oceans are home to an astonishing number of viruses; and that the evolution of HIV is now in overdrive, spawning more mutated strains than we care to imagine.

The *New York Times Book Review* calls Carl Zimmer “as fine a science essayist as we have.” *A Planet of Viruses* is sure to please his many fans and further enhance his reputation as one of America's most respected and admired science journalists.

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A Planet of Viruses By Carl Zimmer Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"Part of a series sponsored by the Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) to help support educational outreach to students, [*A Planet of Viruses*] packs into 109 pages just about everything you've always wanted to know—and a lot you'll probably wish you didn't know—about the viruses that have caused humanity so much grief throughout history."—*Forbes*

(*Forbes*)

"For those with long memories, not much seems to have happened in fundamental physics and cosmology since Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*, 30 years ago. . . . The real action is in biology, where amazing new facts just keep coming. The techniques of genome analysis make it remarkably easy at the moment to make unexpected observations. [*A Planet of Viruses*] is packed with them, carefully assembled by another talented populariser, the science writer and Yale University lecturer Carl Zimmer."—*Times Higher Education*
(*Times Higher Education*)

"Science writer Carl Zimmer has a penchant for writing about things most humans like to avoid; his previous works include *Microcosm: E. Coli* And *The New Science Of Life*, and *Parasite Rex*. Each chapter of his latest work is dedicated to a different type of virus, providing a brief synopsis on what makes a certain species unique, and using the example to launch into fascinating information about what it teaches about the nature of viruses and life in general."

(*A.V. Club*)

"Absolutely top-drawer popular science writing. . . . Zimmer's information-packed, superbly readable look at virological knowledge awakens readers to the fact that not only are viruses everywhere but we couldn't live without them."

(*Booklist (starred review)*)

"A smart, beautiful, and somewhat demented picture book that's likely to give you a case of the willies. In the best way possible."

(Maggie Koerth-Baker *Boing Boing*)

"Carl Zimmer is one of the best science writers we have today. *A Planet of Viruses* is an important primer on the viruses living within and around all of us—sometimes funny, other times shocking, and always accessible. Whether discussing the common cold and flu, little-known viruses that attack bacteria or protect oceans, or the world's viral future as seen through our encounters with HIV or SARS, Zimmer's writing is lively, knowledgeable, and graced with poetic touches."

(Rebecca Skloot, author of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*)

"I'm a serious fan of Carl Zimmer, and *A Planet of Viruses* provided a new treat. It's thoughtful, precise, and engrossing, page by page. Zimmer has an uncanny ability to tell cool tales about nature that leave you with

new thoughts and understanding, always keeping precisely to the science.”

(Richard Preston, author of *The Hot Zone*)

“This little book will interest anyone on this planet who has ever played host to a virus. It is beautifully clear, eminently sensible, and fascinating from beginning to end—like everything Carl Zimmer writes. I don’t know how Zimmer does it! Neither does anyone else who follows and enjoys his work.”

(Jonathan Weiner, author of *Long for This World*)

“An accessible and gripping narrative on a serious topic that manages to explain, in plain English, how viruses are changing the world. Carl Zimmer has found great stories and woven them into an honest, optimistic book. It is a wonderfully vivid and compelling read.”

(Nathan Wolfe, founder and CEO of Global Viral Forecasting)

"As with any great journey, this virtual tour opens your eyes and expands your horizons. You’ll learn amazing facts. But this is no textbook. Zimmer does not do boring or stuffy; reading his work is like hanging out with the smartest, most interesting guy you have ever met as he regales you with tales of his travels and fascinating finds along the way."—*ScienceNews*

(*ScienceNews*)

“I hope Carl Zimmer lives a long, long time so we can get more and more books from him. . . . [*A Planet of Viruses* is] a short read . . . but intense and well explained.”

(Julia Sweeney)

“A contagious fear pervades the public perception of viruses, and rightly so, because they cause many serious diseases; but they are not all bad. In *A Planet of Viruses* Carl Zimmer seeks to convey this message, elegantly communicating the history of viruses, their symbiotic relation with life, and their influence on mankind’s development.”

(*Lancet Infectious Diseases*)

“In *A Planet of Viruses*, science writer Carl Zimmer accomplishes in a mere 100 pages what other authors struggle to do in 500: He reshapes our understanding of the hidden realities at the core of everyday existence. . . . Whether he’s exploring how viruses come to America or picking apart the surprisingly complicated common cold, Zimmer’s train of thought is concise and illuminating.”

(*Washington Post*)

“Although most everyone is familiar with the word “viruses,” few people are aware of the major role they play as powerful agents of change on Earth. Zimmer presents an intriguing journey into the world of viruses, providing a fascinating historical perspective. . . . This is an insightful book that serves as an excellent resource for understanding viruses and their relationship to humans. . . . Highly recommended.”

(*Choice*)

“This book is pure reading pleasure. It is amazing how seamlessly Carl Zimmer tells the stories of viruses in short chapters, describing the history, microbiology, and impacts of viruses in interesting, informative, readable chapters.”

(*Microbe Magazine*)

(*Booklist*)

About the Author

Carl Zimmer is a lecturer at Yale University, where he teaches writing about science and the environment. He is the author of numerous books, including *Microcosm*; *Parasite Rex*; *Evolution: The Triumph of an Idea*; *At the Water's Edge*; and *Soul Made Flesh*. His numerous essays and articles on the life sciences have appeared in the pages of the *New York Times*, *Scientific American*, *Discover*, *Time*, *Science*, *Popular Science*, and *National Geographic*. His work has been anthologized in both *The Best American Science Writing* and *The Best American Science and Nature Writing* series.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Herman Lewis:

The reserve with title A Planet of Viruses includes a lot of information that you can discover it. You can get a lot of benefit after read this book. This particular book exist new understanding the information that exist in this reserve represented the condition of the world now. That is important to yo7u to learn how the improvement of the world. This specific book will bring you in new era of the the positive effect. You can read the e-book on your smart phone, so you can read the item anywhere you want.

Donna Nichols:

A Planet of Viruses can be one of your nice books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary which could increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing A Planet of Viruses however doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource info that maybe you can be among it. This great information can easily drawn you into fresh stage of crucial considering.

Nick Peoples:

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Joseph Levis:

Is it anyone who having spare time in that case spend it whole day through watching television programs or just resting on the bed? Do you need something new? This A Planet of Viruses can be the respond to, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this brand-new era is common not a geek activity. So what these books have than the others?

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