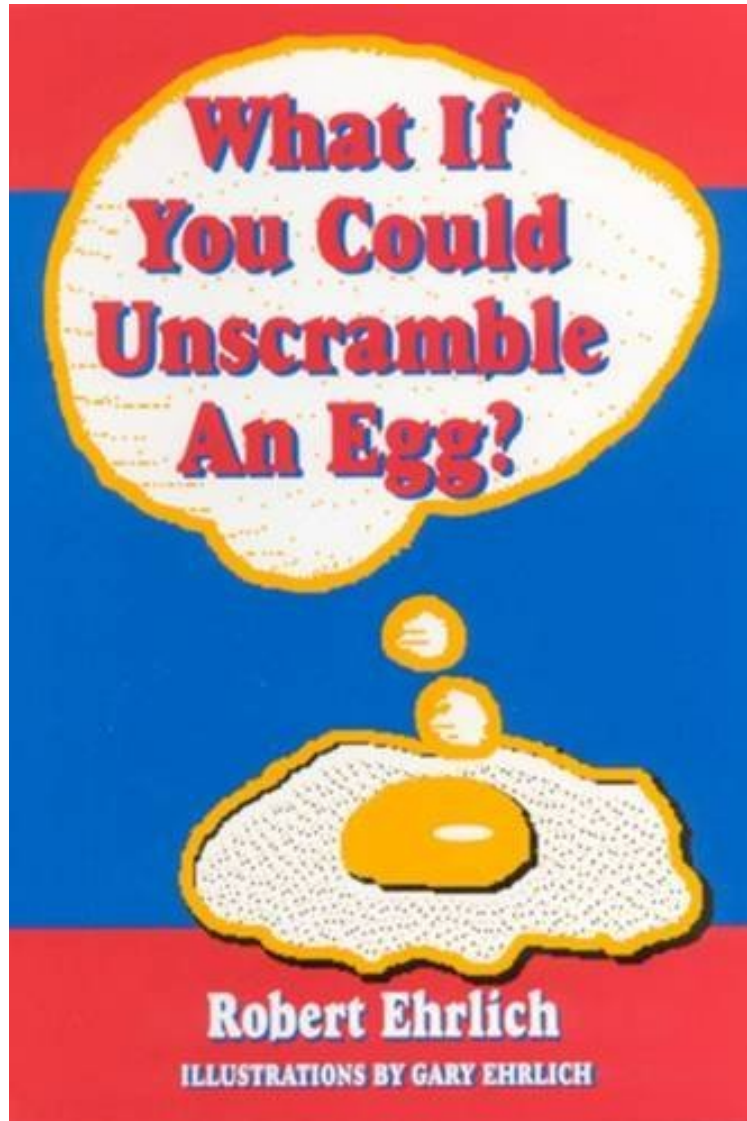


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Robert Ehrlich

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Book by Ehrlich, Robert

From Publishers Weekly Anyone who thinks popularized science has to be superficial should pick up this engaging

volume, by a George Mason University physics professor. Ehrlich (*The Cosmological Milkshake*), writing in imitation of Galileo's *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*, talks with an interlocutor who is mildly interested in both physical and biological science but not sophisticated regarding either of them, and considers more than 100 what-ifs in areas ranging from sex to space aliens to space and time. Throughout, the author retains a light touch, even when dealing with such subjects as the contributions of Maxwell, Einstein, Heisenberg and Planck, amid explanations of why unscrambling an egg is not impossible, why man emerged as the king of beasts because he was the best killer and why overpopulation is the greatest threat to our continued existence. But he demonstrates the humility of outstanding scientists as he points out that the "laws" of nature are provisional. The text is supplemented by witty but technically simple cartoons by Gary Ehrlich. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist

Physics professor Ehrlich uses the device of dialogue with a scientifically innocent questioner to expound some of the marvels and mysteries of modern science. Following the speculative leads that what-if questions furnish, he takes readers on journeys into seemingly fantastic realms that yet are anchored to reality by solid and penetrating scientific knowledge. The subjects of inquiry range from biology to physics to materials and constants. Because of the number of questions, the discussions are limited in depth, yet they are informed throughout by Ehrlich's knowledgeable grasp and his charming sense of whimsy. Dennis Winters