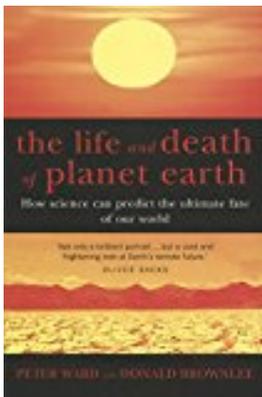


[PDF] The Life And Death Of Planet Earth: How The New Science Of Astrobiology Charts The Ultimate Fate Of Our World

Peter Douglas Ward, Don Brownlee - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: The Life and Death of Planet
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly According to the authors—who argued in their previous book, *Rare Earth*, that the complex life found on earth is probably unique in the vast expanses of the universe—our

planet has a pretty bleak future ahead of it, one that is a mirror image of its past. Ward and Brownlee, a geologist and an astronomer respectively, claim that human civilization has flowered during an 11,000-year warm interlude in a recurring cycle of ice ages. In their view, "global warming," while possibly harmful in the short term, may help postpone the return of the ice. But not too many thousand years from now, skyscraper-high glaciers will again grind across North America as far south as New York City, and civilization will be driven toward the equator to survive, if not into space. Further into the future, the authors argue, the complex give and take between carbon trapped in rocks, water and oxygen in the sea, and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere-the latter playing the most important role in climatic change-will eventually turn earth into a barren sibling of Mars. While the authors don't make an airtight case for their claims about how our planet's climate and geology will begin to rewind, they do deftly bring together findings from many disparate areas of science in a book that science buffs will find hard to put down. 15 b&w illus.

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From Library Journal The science of astrobiology attempts to answer some of the big questions that have long engaged the imagination of the human race. In this fascinating follow-up to *Rare Earth*, geologist/zoologist Ward and astronomer Brownlee, both of the University of Washington, draw an analogy between the planet's development and the human cycles of birth, growth, maturity, and death. They explain the Earth's natural aging process over eons by looking at changes in land formations, oceans, climates, plant and animal life, and the stars. Although the authors are adamant that human recklessness is hastening Earth's demise, it is just as apparent that this ultimate fate is inevitable. Given that the time frame is millions, if not billions, of years, it is difficult for the reader to feel a real impending sense of doom. Still, the authors effectively communicate their knowledge and sense of wonder while making the scientific evidence clear to readers of even limited science backgrounds. Thought-provoking and philosophical questions throughout ensure that this work never reads like a textbook. Readers interested in the environment and "the big picture" will enjoy. Recommended for public libraries of all sizes.

Denise Hamilton, Franklin Pierce Coll. Lib., Rindge, NH

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