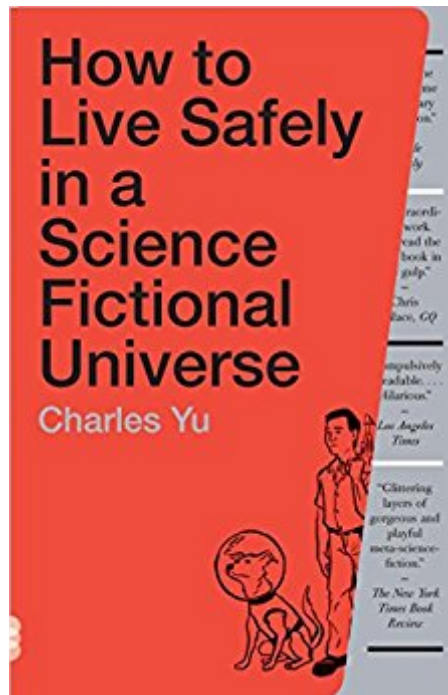




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# How To Live Safely In A Science Fictional Universe: A Novel



## Synopsis

\*This ebook includes photos, illustrations, and a bonus short story, which add to the ever-expanding world of Minor Universe 31. Photos and illustrations appear as hyperlinks in text. National Book Foundation 5 Under 35 Award winner Charles Yu delivers his debut novel, a razor-sharp, ridiculously funny, and utterly touching story of a son searching for his father . . . through quantum space-time. Â Minor Universe 31 is a vast story-space on the outskirts of fiction, where paradox fluctuates like the stock market, lonely sexbots beckon failed protagonists, and time travel is serious business. Every day, people get into time machines and try to do the one thing they should never do: change the past. That's where Charles Yu, time travel technicianâpart counselor, part gadget repair manâsteps in. He helps save people from themselves. Literally. When he's not taking client calls or consoling his boss, Phil, who could really use an upgrade, Yu visits his mother (stuck in a one-hour cycle of time, she makes dinner over and over and over) and searches for his father, who invented time travel and then vanished. Accompanied by TAMMY, an operating system with low self-esteem, and Ed, a nonexistent but ontologically valid dog, Yu sets out, and back, and beyond, in order to find the one day where he and his father can meet in memory. He learns that the key may be found in a book he got from his future self. It's called How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe, and he's the author. And somewhere inside it is the information that could help himâin fact it may even save his life. Â Wildly new and adventurous, Yu's debut is certain to send shock waves of wonder through literary space-time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I want to say I remember seeing this in the New Yorker when it first came out. I looked for it again when I read a newer release on theories of time travel that cited this book a lot. Pretty sure it was *Time Travel: A History* by James Gleick. It's not really a story. Well, it kind of is. The narrator having the same name as the author and it tells the story of his father inventing time travel and a kid looking up to his father. But if you're in this for the plot, you might be let down a bit. There is a blurb on the cover of my edition calling this a "A great Calvino-esque thrill ride of a book". That really directed me how to read this book. It turns out that it is not science fiction. It science metafiction or metascience fiction. I'm not sure which one fits better. It's a book about science fiction and time travel and paradoxes. It is an interesting text if you approach it in that sort of manner. I hated *Invisible Cities*, but loved *If on a winter's night a traveler*, so I can image there are some mixed reactions here. In any manner, it is worth the read you just have to know to come at it obliquely.

I am a big fan of his and only read this book because he got such high reviews on a short story in The New Yorker Magazine. If you like "the Hitchhiker's Guide", Douglas Adams - you will like this. Very creative on several levels. Charles Yu is science fiction on steroids and possibly late night pizza. I usually read biography, business, and history books.

(Partly read in Kindle, partly heard in audiobook. This review reflects both.)  
Story Flavor: Post-modern psycho-social technological sci-fi (think "Raw Shark Texts" has a baby with "Psychohistorical Crisis" that gets adopted and raised by "Hollow Chocolate Bunnies of the Apocalypse").  
Audio Narration Flavor: Ascerbic, all-knowing humor reminiscent of noir tough-guy, blended with the tentative consideration of a philosophy student....and, believe it or not, that was the perfect voice to narrate this book. Many kudos to the audiobook narrator, and the producer who seems to have carefully read the book before choosing him. The story follows a main character through a bildungsroman event with the unlikely catalyst of getting stuck in a time loop. As is typical, the reader will not necessarily like the main character in the beginning, but will inevitably be pulling

for him (partially facilitated by the fact that he is quite literally confronting his own mortality; partially facilitated by the considerable and constant self-referential/fourth-wall-eclipsing nature of the book that gives the distinct notion that the whole thing may not be the main character's fault and perhaps the author is a meta-villain) and the supporting characters around him (for having to deal with him). The flavor text of the book is rife with partially scientific theories and considerations of what disciplines would have to develop in a universe wherein time travel is common and a recreational commodity. It also dabbles in geography, literature, and a numerical view of sociology. Very interesting, and each tidbit discussed in just enough detail to leave the reader wanting more. This is also one of the more sensible methods of handling the concept of a loop in time travel. Anyone who wants to explore the loop concept without getting dizzy should enjoy this book. There is one character that was severely underdeveloped throughout the book, and that was Ed the dog. Do not expect the dog to be a source of humor or non-vocal comment for the storyline, as he serves more to demonstrate the nature of the world the author is telling. Overall summary: Five out of five. Excellent read. One of the rare Post-moderns that gives the reader plenty to consider without regretting the reading and getting depressed.

A sharp book that upticks the level of writing and story to more literary proportions while still honoring the sci-if genre, which can be much more plot-oriented with poor writing than what Yu offers up. The story of a damaged man looking to undo mistakes, the classic situation and dilemma of a time travel story, as can one ever really change events or is one's life the result of a causality loop that can't change. Yu writes with humor and intelligence and some heartbreak, of course, as his protagonist looks to rediscover his family and put himself on a happier path.

I don't want to be overly harsh towards this book, as many people might find it to be very fascinating. I do, however, want to say that it did not live up to what I thought it would be. Reading reviews and such led me to purchase the book, yet as I read it I realized an underlying truth of the story - it's boring. Sure, there are interesting aspects to the book, including the characters and personalities (to some extent). The concept is interesting, if not entirely original. The book just seemed to lack a depth of character that would have made it all the more engaging. Reading the story evoked a sense of discontent and mediocrity within me, as if I were reading in a gray, windowless room strewn with disheveled cardboard boxes and the occasional drip of water from a rusty pipe. It gets three stars because it was interesting enough, but surely lacked enough 'oomph' to push it to four.

Love this book. It's straightforward and full of classic science fiction tropes, but Yu's writing is engaging and at times, emotionally charging.

The book by Charles Yu, is written in the perspective of Yu. It is very confusing and something a reader would have to pay close attention to, and would be a book read by college students and advanced readers. In my opinion, the book is alright 6/10

Dont waste your time! I read the first three pages, and promptly fell asleep! I'll likely trade it to the used book store for something readable.

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