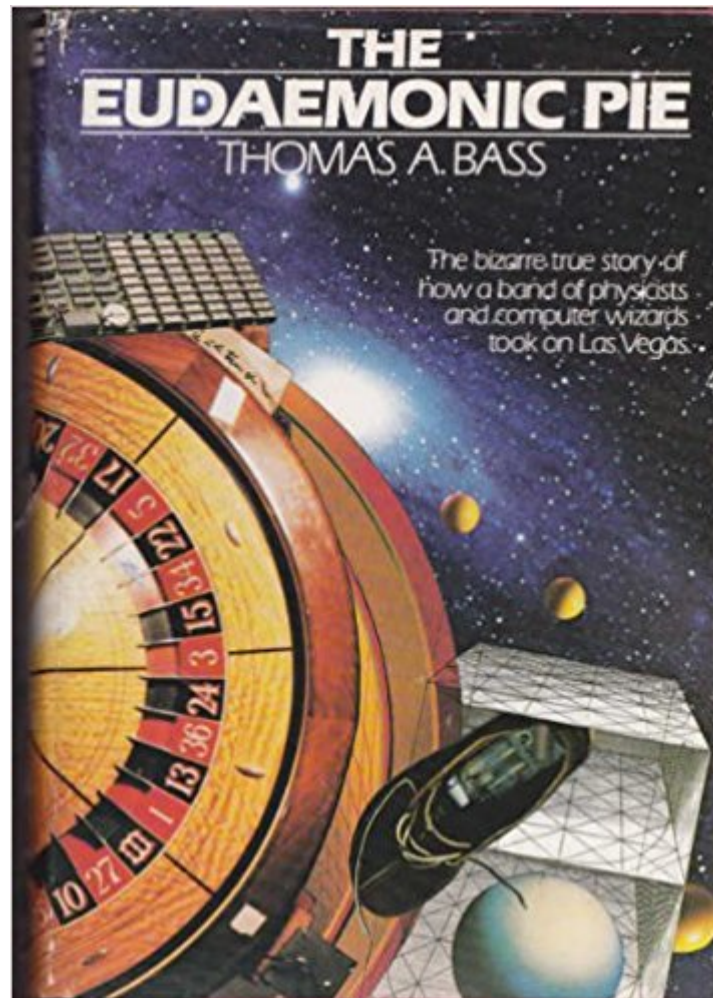




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The Eudaemonic Pie



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Synopsis

A high-tech adventure about breaking the bank in Las Vegas with toe-operated computers. The result is a veritable piñata of a book, which, when smashed by the readers enthusiastic attention, showers upon him everything from the history of useless roulette systems to the latest developments in chaos theory, said The New York Times. Richard Dawkins called it an astonishing and fascinating tale of scientific heroism. The Los Angeles Times said that Bass has done the best job so far of capturing the marriage of technical imagination and the communal coziness that gave birth to Silicon Valley. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Hardcover: 324 pages

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin; 1St Edition edition (April 1985)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0395353351

ISBN-13: 978-0395353356

Product Dimensions: 9 x 5.9 x 1.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (16 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

- Love this story! There is some validity in the reviews that critique the pace/style of the writing. However, I read it back in the early 90s, and the fact that it is still a vivid recollection counts for something. The advantage of time passage in analysis is better context and objectivity. Of course the disadvantage is that the details are not fresh. Probably I have forgotten minor irritations with style, while the strongly positive impression lingers. I do not give 5 stars lightly; though in this case the rating is more for the intrinsic wonder of the tale more than the technical adeptness in the telling.- The story is ultimately not about the goal, not about winning or losing or beating the house. Its really about the journeying. A unique shared human experience of some ordinary yet extraordinary people in ordinary yet extraordinary times. The ordinary draws the reader in with a continual reminder that it's a true story, magnifying the extraordinary nature of events. Somehow I found it intensely compelling to follow the characters and realize that in the same month I was, say,

starting a newspaper route or trying to make the varsity soccer team, these offbeat-yet-practical, idealistic-yet-enterprising, brilliant-yet-sidetracked, anachronistic hippie-tinged grad students were mathematically modeling a roulette table in their central california bungalow or troubleshooting a shock-giving computer taped to their body in a casino bathroom hoping security won't find them out. Its a human story because its about about creativity, determination, curiosity, fear, motivation, joy, friendship and pain. Its a techno-geek-as-hero story as they blaze trails at the forefront of computer technology before you could even think about buying a TRS-80, much less a Commodore 64.

I first heard about this book during fall semester 1991 from a fellow math grad student at the University of Texas at Austin who had just moved into our way-too-cozy little RL Moore Hall (RLM) office of three. It was my sixth and last semester there. I was on my way out of the Ph.D. program without any new titles attached to my name, or special paper to flash at prospective employers. With money short, that last semester I slept nights in the office on a surprisingly comfortable bench intended solely for day visits from students and colleagues.*It was with this backdrop of living in Hotel RLM and experiencing a renewed kinship with the Beatles lyric "Oh, that magic feeling, nowhere to go, nowhere to go," that I checked the book out of the university library and spent the next few gorgeous November afternoons lost in its pages on the South Mall, with a view of the Texas State Capitol building a mile to the south. Aged 32, I had still never been to a casino in my life (on a solo cross-country motorcycle trip six years earlier I'd stopped for gas, and gas only, on my way through Las Vegas). This 1991 read still ranks among my most enjoyable of all time. I disagree with the author-ragging that's gone on in many of the comments here. Bass clearly put a lot of care and effort into the presentation. Upon reread, I still find it to be an inspired work of art and very well-written book. The only minor thing I've noticed (in the paperback version, anyway) to really complain about are a few typos here and there that jump right out (e.g., "perennnially"). It seems a bit ironic given the subject material, that digital spell checkers evidently weren't used to copyedit the author's work.

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