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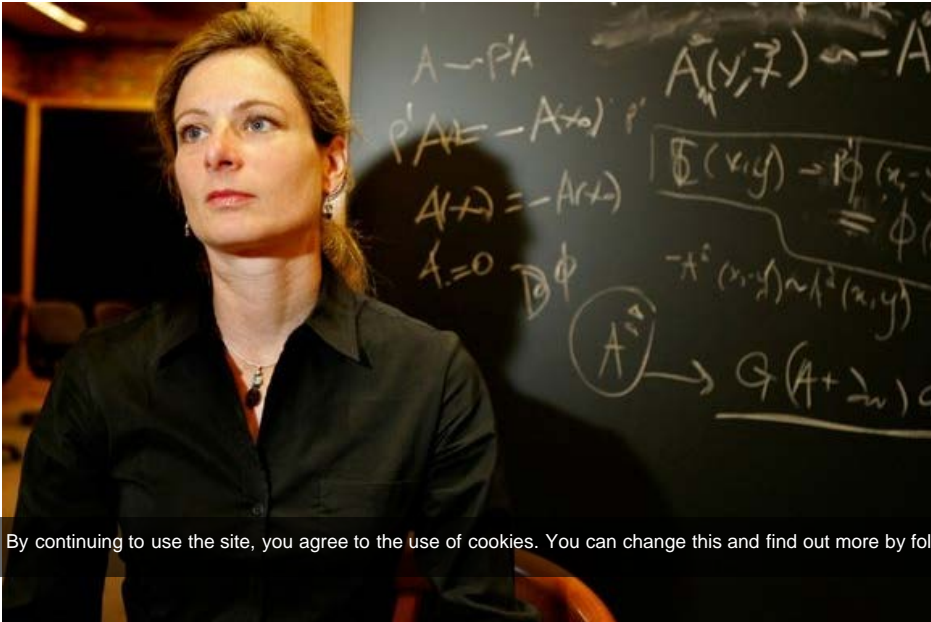
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Sunday Times Published: 9 December 2012

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Lisa Randall, author of Knocking on Heaven's Door

Our Choice

Knocking on Heaven's Door by Lisa Randall

Vintage £9.99/ebook £10.43, ST Bookshop price £9.49

Randall — a professor of particle physics and cosmology at Harvard — says she needed to vent her frustration about “the way science is currently understood and

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applied". This book, written with dry wit and ice-cool clarity, is the result.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by big science but, as Randall points out, scientists don't usually set out to answer the big questions; they are much more likely to become obsessed about some small question that they then worry at tenaciously, sometimes for years.

The irony of the Large Hadron Collider at Cern, for instance, is that although it is enormous, what is truly jaw-dropping about it is the fineness of the measurements being made. Individual proton collisions carry no more kinetic energy than two mosquitoes flying into each other, and even then most of

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