



The Wavewatcher's Companion

Gavin Pretor - Pinney

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One bright February afternoon on a beach in Cornwall, Gavin Pretor-Pinney took a break from cloudspotting and started watching the waves rolling into shore. Mesmerised, he wondered where they had come from, and decided to find out. He soon realised that waves don't just appear on the ocean, they are everywhere around us, and our lives depend on them. From the rippling beats of our hearts, to the movement of food through our digestive tracts and of signals across our brains, waves are the transport systems of our bodies. Everything we see and hear reaches us via light and sound waves, and our information age is reliant on the microwaves and infrared waves used by the telephone and internet infrastructure. From shockwaves unleashed by explosions to torsional waves that cause suspension bridges to collapse, from sonar waves that allow submarines to 'see' with sound to Mexican waves that sweep through stadium crowds...there were waves, it seemed, wherever Gavin looked. But what, he wondered, could they all have in common with ones we splash around in on holiday? By the time he made the ultimate surfer's pilgrimage to Hawaii, Gavin had become a world-class wavewatcher, although he was still rubbish at surfing. And, while this fascinating, funny book may not teach you how to ride the waves, it will show you how to tune into the shapes, colours and forms of life's many undulations.

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