



# The End of the Certain World: The Life and Science of Max Born

*Nancy Thorndike Greenspan*

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In 1920, Albert Einstein wrote to Max Born, “Theoretical physics will flourish wherever you happen to be; there is no other Born to be found in Germany today.” *The End of the Certain World* presents for the first time Born’s full story: Nobel physicist, a discoverer of quantum theory, exile from Hitler’s Germany, teacher of nine Nobel physicists. Born’s role in the “Golden Age of Physics” helped to shape the science of the twentieth century and open the door to the modern era. Robert Oppenheimer, Edward Teller, and Eugene Wigner, among others, flocked to Göttingen, Germany in the 1920’s to work with Born, the physicist who had discovered one of the most profound principles of the century - the physics of indeterminacy. In a cruel twist of fate Born, a pacifist who loved science for its beauty, had educated these renowned scientists who developed the atom bomb. Not everyone embraced Born’s revolutionary quantum principle. Throughout much of his forty year friendship with Einstein, the two debated the nature of the universe - deterministic versus non-deterministic - with Einstein declaring “God does not play dice”, even though the Nobel Committee supported Born’s position when they awarded him the 1954 Prize. A social history and a history of science as well as an intimate biography, *The End of the Certain World* reveals the story of a great physicist and humanitarian and his struggle with the forces of religion, politics, and war during the upheavals of the twentieth century.

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