

《史蒂芬·霍金：这世上根本没有黑洞》

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Wait, so my life may not have disappeared down a black hole after all?

There is a chance for it to emerge and bloom like the career of David Hasselhoff?

It's charming when a phrase enters the language and we think we all know what it means. In the case of "black hole," we think of an infinity of black nothingness that swallows everything that slips into it.

But now, in a new paper called "Information Preservation and Weather Forecasting for Black Holes," Stephen Hawking has cast the cat among the black, holey pigeons and caused a scattering of incomprehension.

His precise words were: "The absence of event horizons mean that there are no black holes -- in the sense of regimes from which light can't escape to infinity."

It seems clear. There are no forever and ever holes of blackness. There is always the chance that light might emerge.

Hawking continued, however: "There are however apparent horizons which persist for a period of time. This suggests that black holes should be redefined as metastable bound states of the gravitational field."

So there are black holes. It's just that we should redefine them a touch. So what's this apparent horizon?

Well, it's "a surface along which light rays attempting to rush away from the black hole's core will be suspended."

But if they're suspended, they will never emerge, stuck in solitary confinement like the Man in the Iron Mask. The result is surely still the same. once something disappears into a black hole, it's done for.

At times of existential stress like these, I turn to Nature magazine for help. It suggests that, at least in theory (and, let's face it, this is all theory), black holes might at some point disappear.

However, the magazine offers a dispiriting set of words from Don Page, a physicist from the University of Edmonton in Canada. It might be possible that particles could emerge from black holes, he said.

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