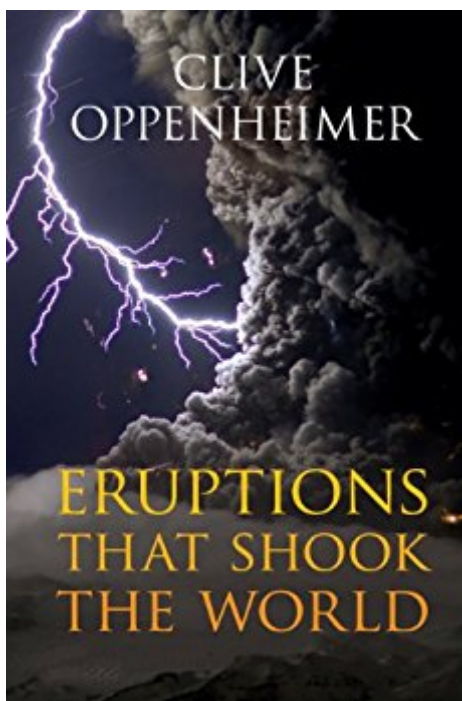


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Eruptions That Shook The World



Synopsis

What does it take for a volcanic eruption to really shake the world? Did volcanic eruptions extinguish the dinosaurs, or help humans to evolve, only to decimate their populations with a super-eruption 73,000 years ago? Did they contribute to the ebb and flow of ancient empires, the French Revolution and the rise of fascism in Europe in the 19th century? These are some of the claims made for volcanic cataclysm. Volcanologist Clive Oppenheimer explores rich geological, historical, archaeological and palaeoenvironmental records (such as ice cores and tree rings) to tell the stories behind some of the greatest volcanic events of the past quarter of a billion years. He shows how a forensic approach to volcanology reveals the richness and complexity behind cause and effect, and argues that important lessons for future catastrophe risk management can be drawn from understanding events that took place even at the dawn of human origins.

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Customer Reviews

*****"In his explosive book, Clive Oppenheimer brilliantly shows how the history of volcanoes and

people is a tangled account. From our earliest ancestors to travelers battling with the effects of ash clouds on airline flights, our evolutionary destiny has been played out in the shadow of volcanoes, often with disastrous results." -- Clive Gamble, University of London

Global disasters make head news, and mega volcanoes resonate more than most. Often, the deadliest eruptions, like tsunamis come out of the blue. The author argues that such past events, when understood, is key to surviving the future. That could hold far greater disasters than the last recent eruption of the Icelandic volcano that shut down Europe's air space. From the Bay of Naples to the River Don, the little-known eruption, which devastated southern Italy happened some 39,000 years ago just as Europeans were developing stone tools. These are stories that don't make the Discovery Channel. Two centuries ago eruption of the Laki volcano, whose poisonous smog killed tens of thousands, as far away as England and France, not just in Iceland only. Death tolls are not the only measure of an eruption's influence on the society. Oppenheimer shows how a forensic approach to volcanoes geology reveals the richness and complexity behind the cause and effect. Did volcanic eruptions extinguish the dinosaurs, or help humans to evolve, only to exterminate their populations with a super-eruption 73,000 years ago? From just the first chapter, the author's compelling style in the world of volcanoes becomes evident in his chronicles of "Eruptions That Shook The World."

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